

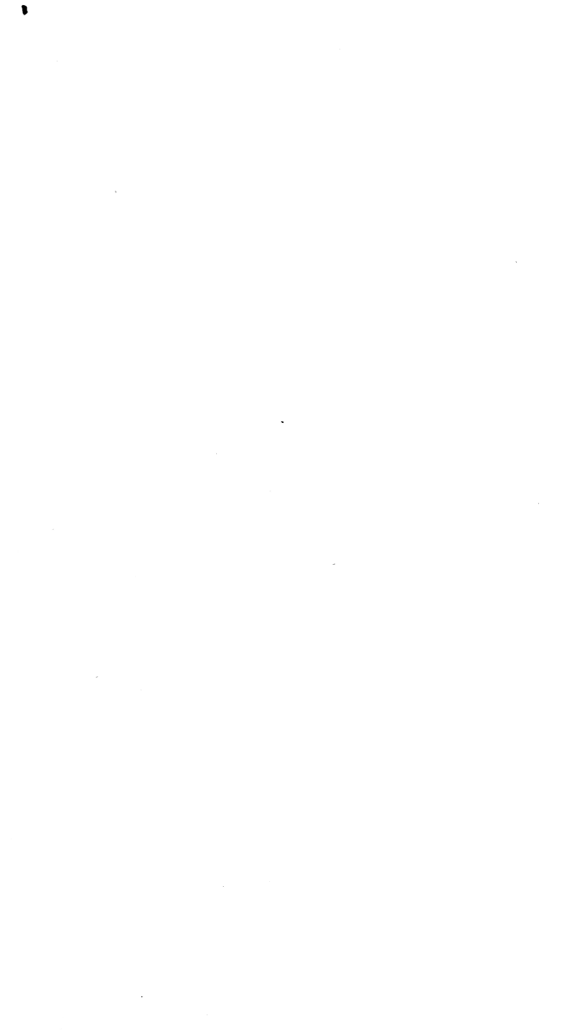


CHILDREN'S BOOK  
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. Maria Mills.



THE HISTORY  
OF  
MICHAEL KEMP,  
THE  
HAPPY FARMER'S LAD.

BY THE LATE  
MRS. WOODROOFFE.

FIFTH EDITION.

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## CHAPTER I.

SKETCH OF THE VILLAGE OF P., THE RESIDENCE OF MICHAEL KEMP, THE HAPPY FARMER'S LAD.—MICHAEL GOES OUT TO SERVICE.—CHARACTER OF HIS MASTER, FARMER MOSS —MICHAEL'S DETERMINATION TO OBSERVE THE SABBATH PLACES HIM IN A DILEMMA WITH HIS MASTER.—HE GOES TO CHURCH.—REFLECTIONS ON THE OCCASION.—A SERIOUS ACCIDENT BEFALS HIS FELLOW-SERVANT, JEM.—MICHAEL ATTENDS HIM DURING HIS ILLNESS.—HIS ANXIETY TO ENLIGHTEN JEM'S UNDERSTANDING.—FARMER MOSS IS UNEXPECTEDLY CALLED FROM HOME.—IN HIS ABSENCE HE DEPUTES MICHAEL TO SUPERINTEND AFFAIRS.—THE JEALOUSY OF MICHAEL'S ENEMIES IS STRENGTHENED BY THIS CIRCUMSTANCE.—AT THE REQUEST OF FARMER MOSS, MICHAEL GOES TO MANAGE THE AFFAIRS OF A WIDOW.

THE village of P. was situated on a gentle ascent clothed with beech woods. An oval area seemed to have been cleared for the church and village. The clergyman (though not a rich man) loved his people, and his kind heart was always planning something to do them good. As the ascent to church was rather steep, he employed old men and boys to make it more gradual, and planted various beautiful evergreens for the last furlong of the way. On Saturday afternoon four boys, who delighted in doing any thing which could oblige the clergyman or his family, swept this path as clean as a parlour: it was pleasing to see how cheerful they were if any of the family met

them and thanked them for their industry. One of these lads, whose name was MICHAEL KEMP, had become a truly *good* boy ; that is, he was a *Christian*, convinced of his need of a Saviour, and rejoicing in the hope of everlasting life through Jesus Christ. This hope inspired him with a desire to please God, who had done so much for him ; and as Mr. Walker had been ever anxious to lead the children of the Sunday-school to consider time as only preparatory to eternity, this lad thought he could never do enough to prove his gratitude to the person who was the means of doing him so great a service : sometimes he gathered blackberries for the children, sometimes made nets for the fruit-trees ; and though he was always *well paid* for his attention, yet the love which prompted it was so pleasing to Mr. Walker, that he heard with great concern Michael was hired to live in Worcestershire, and lamented the loss of a boy who was so good an example in his parish.

The time came when Michael was to see the world (as he called it) ; for though a good lad, he had a curiosity to visit other places and other persons, little thinking (poor fellow !) how much better off he was at home.

When he arrived at H. the master received him very civilly, told him his business, took him over his farm and stable, and said he would find it a good place if he did his duty—‘ My horses

*must* be well fed and well kept, but I will have no waste." Michael made no reply, but bowed respectfully. Farmer Moss was a man of judgment: he liked the boy's looks, and he did not like him the less for his silence. On *Saturday* evening Michael found his work was as late as on any other evening: this surprised him, for the master he had lived with at P. gave these orders: 'To-morrow is Sunday: let all business cease, and your horses be in the stable at six; be ready to clean all up for the Sabbath, and let the daysmen come for their wages by seven, or I shall not pay till Monday.' Not so here: work was later than usual; no appearance of labourers; the evening was lengthened; and when Michael had finished, and was going to bed, his master said, 'My lad, you need not hurry up in the morning, church does not begin till eleven: if you are down by eight, it will do.' Michael made no reply: he was up at his usual time, but came down by eight. He searched his Bible to see what was his duty if he were in an irreligious family, for such he feared this was. He found Daniel did his duty at the court of Darius, but he did not presume to reprove his superiors till called upon: he found the Scriptures universally enjoining meekness and submission. The Bible was Michael's guide, and he resolved to follow it. Before he went down, he made the following prayer: 'O Lord, thou knowest I am a poor weak boy, and

it is not in *man* to direct his steps: look upon me; give me spiritual wisdom to walk wisely in thy way. Honour me by making me useful in this house. May I order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters.' He added much more, which is not now to our purpose.

Greatly was Michael surprised to see a very ragged set of men and women beset the door, about nine o'clock, and clamour who should get in first; and also, to see Farmer Moss open his wainscot desk, and take out his bag of money and pay each their weekly wages. Michael said nothing *to* his master, he was to order himself lowly and reverently; he said nothing *of* him, because he was to keep his tongue from evil speaking. He was just running out of the room, when his master called out, 'Hark ye, lad; take the mare and carry a cheese to \*\*\*. Turn to the right when you get out of the village, go straight by the turnpike, you can't miss; ask for Mrs. Foster, tell her the cheese is tenpence the pound, and it weighs eleven pounds and a half.' 'Sir,' said Michael (colouring up till he was as red as scarlet), 'am I—am I to go to-day?' 'Go *directly*, and you may be back for church; 'tis but two miles and three quarters.' Michael did not know what he ought to do; at last he recollected his Bible, and he remembered three texts: first, 'Servants, obey your masters in *all things*!' next, 'Remember the sabbath-day

to keep it holy !' and then, 'We ought to obey God rather than men.' He sighed, and said, 'What shall I do?' He was in the passage : his master heard him, and coming out, saw the boy looking very odd ; on which he said, 'What ails thee, lad?' 'Sir,' said Michael, 'I don't know what to do.' 'Didn't I tell thee turn to the right?' 'Yes, Sir ; but'—'But what? What is the lad doing?' 'Sir, my father and Mr. Walker both told me, when I didn't know what to do, always to act as the Bible speaks.' 'And what has the Bible to do with the road to \*\*\*, boy?' 'Sir, it says, Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy ! and it says, Servants, obey your masters in *all things*.' And the boy stood (pointing to the text with his fore finger), trembling and blushing. 'Humph,' said the farmer, whistling, 'this comes of Sunday-schools.—Ho there, Jem.' A smart lively boy appeared. 'Go you to \*\*\*, to Mrs. Foster's : take the cheese ; say 'tis tenpence the pound, and weighs eleven pounds and a half.' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Take the mare, d'ye hear.' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Be sure you come back to church.'

While this passed between Jem and his master, Michael's thoughts travelled to P. 'If we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear,' was a favourite text with Mr. Walker. The very Sunday before Michael left P. he preached on it, and said, in the close of his sermon, 'One truth

I wish to impress on your minds : if you profane the Sabbath, and then enter this church to worship, such worship is an offence unto God. Turn to the 58th chapter of Isaiah and the 13th and 14th verses, 'If thou turn away thy foot,' &c. I *never* shall forget that day, (thought Michael,) and I hope never to forget the sermon.

The farmer, as he drew near, looking graver than usual, said, 'You may go to church now, the bell tolls ; any of the folk will tell you where to sit.' Michael bowed and went out. When he came into the churchyard he found it very full. It was a fine warm day ; and the people were an odd mixture, some well dressed, others shabby and smart, and some scarcely decent : one small group attracted Michael's attention ; they stood apart from the congregation, near the wall ; and those outside seemed to watch sharply to see if the clergyman was coming. Michael's first thought was, that they were waiting to catch a smile, as he had been used to do from Mr. Walker ; till hearing the pattering of the hoofs of horses, the whole company dispersed, and he was surprised to see a mark on the ground as if they had been at marbles ; and so indeed they had ! Michael hastened into church, and going through the porch, saw many farmers sitting, and his master among them : they were talking very loud ; and he heard one say, 'I never saw a finer heifer ;' another, 'That piece of land is desperate wet,

however.' He passed on ; and as he stood waiting to be put into a seat, several fellows ran out of the belfry as hard as they could, and in their nailed shoes clattered into the gallery, laughing and whispering loud till the clergyman began to read.

He was a very fine-looking young man with a genteel countenance and manner : he read the service with more than common attention ; and when the prayers were over, a psalm was sung, in the gallery, by some of the young men. Michael was surprised to observe, that the young men who sung were whispering almost all the time of service, that none of them brought a prayer-book, and that the singing was all with them ; few people joined in the responses, though the congregation was large ; there seemed to be no Sunday-school, and very few children in proportion to the size of the village. Michael fixed himself with great attention to hear the sermon, and joined Mr. P. very devoutly when he uttered that beautiful collect, 'Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*' The text was, 'Judge not, that

ye be not judged.' Michael prayed that he might not judge any one, and lifted his eyes to the preacher. Mr. P. warned the people, in a very florid manner, not to suspect their neighbours of evil; to avoid fancying themselves better than their neighbours; to be kind to one another; and to live in good fellowship with each other; and that such a life would be pleasing to God, and secure our eternal salvation. Michael wondered, because he always had been taught that our salvation was the gift of God through Jesus Christ; and he was greatly surprised to hear such a gentleman, who had ended every prayer with 'through Jesus Christ our Lord,' talk of living in kindness with one another as the way of salvation. About twenty minutes ended the sermon. The farmer went up to ask Mr. P. if he wouldn't come in. He thanked him, but said he was going to dine with Sir Robert, and would call another time: he touched his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

Michael went home: dinner was ready; provisions good, plentiful, and cleanly, were ever provided at Farmer Moss's, and every comfort of life was found in his dwelling; he was a liberal, but a proud man. He had not forgot Michael and his texts; it had been present to his imagination all the morning: but Michael was respectful, he had not spoken a word, his look

was timid, not saucy ; and as the farmer could not deny the Word of God, he thought, if the lad continued to behave well, he should pass it by.

He sat down to dinner, looked at the men, and suddenly exclaimed, 'Where's Jem?' 'I don't know,' answered William ; 'he was not at church.' 'Odds ! I sent him to Mrs. Foster's ; he went on the mare ; go, see, William, if you can find him.'—William returned,—he was not to be found. The farmer dined ; but he was uneasy. Michael rose, and blushing very deeply, said, 'Will you please, Sir, that I should go and seek him?' The farmer, with his face turned to the window, said, 'Aye, boy, an you will.' Scarce had he reached the turnpike-road ere he met poor Jem, with his head tied up and his arm in a sling, supported on an old horse by a good-looking old man, and the mare limping, both her knees being sadly cut. Michael was a most tender-hearted boy, and he looked and felt all kindness towards both. 'What can I do, Sir?' said he. 'Lead the mare, child.' In this order they reached the farm : Farmer Moss was looking out, and he was alternately pale and red, as the boys drew near. 'Hey, Jem ! what's the matter ?' 'Sir—Sir,' said the boy (in a crying tone), 'I couldn't help it, Sir ; I hurt *my head*'—'and the *mare's knees* !' added the farmer. 'I wouldn't have had the mare's knees broke,' continued he, 'for *fifty pounds* ! no-o-o, not for *fifty pounds* !' 'Sir,' said the boy, 'my head

bleeds sadly, what shall I do?' Michael led the poor boy in, and ran back again to his master. 'Sir, shall I go for the doctor?' 'No, boy, what for?' 'For Jem, Sir.' 'No, tie it up with a little sugar; it will be well in the morning.' The mare was led into the stable: the men were called in to look at her; and Farmer Newton was sent for, but his opinion did not mend the matter. 'Tis a bad business; that mare will never be what she has been.' 'Never!' said Farmer Moss.—Jem was in terrible pain all night—quite delirious. Michael sat up with him; and at five o'clock next morning he went to his master's door, and said, 'Sir!' Then he tapped. 'Sir!' 'Well, lad, what now?' 'Sir, Jem is very bad; the gruel did not do any good, and the baudage has been torn off many times: he's in a desperate raging fit, Sir, and I can't watch him, indeed I can't; and I am afraid he'll die.' The farmer got up and went to the boy's room, and found him raving in a burning fever. 'Why,' said the farmer, 'he does look very sick, indeed! Do you know where our doctor lives?' Michael bowed, and said, 'No, Sir, but I can ask.' 'No, Robert shall go.'—Robert returned in about an hour, and the doctor soon followed. The boy was examined; his skull was fractured; a consultation was called, and an operation determined on. Michael ran up and down; never for three weeks did the poor fellow get one *whole* night's rest: he was ever within

call ; he worked all day, and watched by night ; and constantly prayed with simple Christian fervour that God would please to restore poor Jem. And one day, when he was very earnest in prayer for him, and saying, 'O Lord, spare him !' Jem looked at him, and said, Why, Michael, what art muttering about ?

*Michael.* My dear Jem, I am praying for you.

*Jem.* That's very kind, indeed ; for I'm sure it's more than I do for myself.

*Michael.* Why, Jem, do you never pray ?

*Jem.* No, not now, I've quite forgot ; grandmother used to teach me a prayer.

*Michael.* What was that ?

*Jem.* Oh ! there was a great deal of it : there was ten ; and it began about having no other gods but one.

*Michael.* Why those are the Commandments.

*Jem.* Ah, so 'twas ! Well, I did learn another about 'Our Father.'

*Michael.* Yes ; that was our Lord's Prayer.

*Jem.* Ah, so it was.

*Michael.* My dear Jem, I wonder what you can be thinking of when you are at church, because the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer are repeated every Sunday.

*Jem.* I hardly ever go to church ; I don't see the use on't. Master almost always sleeps. The ladies always seem to be looking about at the other ladies : and as for me, I never could understand

what I went to church for; our parson talks so very genteel, and the prayers are so very long, I am really so tired I never do wish to go.

*Michael.* And where do you go?

*Jem.* Oh I never know. Sometimes I go to see my sister, sometimes I go to fives, sometimes I bathe; I do just what I like.

*Michael.* Ah, Jem! I hope when you are well, you will go and return public thanks for your recovery.

Poor Jem made no reply, deceit formed no part of his character. He longed to get well, for he was tired of lying in bed; but he rather wished to recover that he might enjoy himself. Prayer and praise had as yet formed no part of his enjoyment: for the first, he knew nothing about it; and when he heard the clerk say, 'Let us sing to the praise and glory of God,' he always found people in the gallery singing, and no one in the congregation joining, so that he drew a very natural conclusion, that it was no part of his business.

Michael had so long watched Jem that he loved him, and could not rest easy till he made him feel that it was his duty to pray; and he daily became more anxious about him, for he had heard Mr. Walker say, 'if affliction does not soften, it hardens;' and he knew that Jem had no man caring for his soul. He saw that his master was more uneasy about the horses,

and he felt that his care of Jem was very important. He had heard Mr. Walker say, 'that we should undertake nothing without prayer;' and this made him feel how necessary it was to pray before he could hope to do any good to others.

One Monday evening, after market, Farmer Newton called on Farmer Moss, and after other chat, Michael passing through the room, his master called to him, and asked 'What the doctor said about Jem?' 'Sir?' said Michael; 'the doctor, Sir?' 'Aye, lad,' said the farmer, colouring high; 'didn't I *order* the doctor to come?' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Well, boy—he did come. Well, boy?' in a very angry tone. 'But, Sir,' trembling, 'he has not been here for more than a fortnight.' 'Oh! but I suppose there is no occasion—' 'O! yes, Sir, I believe there *is*; for I am obliged to eat down the proud flesh twice in the week with lump sugar.' 'Well, if the boy wants the doctor, he shall have him: it shall never be said any boy was neglected in my house.' Michael bowed, and said, 'If you please, Sir, I'll go and fetch him, for I do think that ointment don't agree.' 'You may go an you will,' was an answer always at hand when Farmer Moss granted a petition against his will. Michael went. 'What an uncommonly fine boy that is!' said Farmer Newton. 'Humph!' said Farmer Moss, 'the boy's well enough, but such boys want keeping down.' 'Well, I don't know,

but I always thought that boy uncommonly good.' 'Aye, aye, I dare say you did; but that boy can say uncommonly impudent things.' 'Indeed!' said Farmer Newton; 'well if ever you part with him I should like to have him. I never saw a stable like yours; I never saw such a pigsty; I never saw such a saddle-house, every thing in it shines, no dirt; and the boy himself is always clean. I say the boy is a fine boy, and main clever.' 'No, no! I'm not going to part, if he behaves as he has done since Jem was ill. I can't say I wish to part with him.' 'Why I thought he was but just come when Jem fell; that *very Sunday*, they told me: and your man William says he never saw such a lad, he can do every thing, he is always busy; and then the boy is so handy. Last Thursday I broke the lash of my whip, as I was driving my wife, and our horse Norfolk will not stir a step without a whip. I saw your lad: Michael, says I, can you mend this whip, d'ye think? I'll try, Sir, if you please. He stepped into the shop just by; got some strong brown thread, waxed it well, and the whip has held ever since. Now it is not the value of the whip, but I like to look at it, it's a standing proof what a willing mind can do.' Farmer Moss made no reply; he was rather tired of hearing Michael's praise. 'Well, good night, neighbour!' said Farmer Newton, and so they parted.

The doctor arrived soon. He hoped all was going on well. 'Oh yes,' said the farmer, 'I have no doubt on't. *I think* the boy's well enough!' 'Indeed!' said the doctor. 'Your lad thought the ointment didn't agree.' 'Aye, *he thought!*' 'Why, to be sure,' said the doctor, 'the maid servant who attends him must know best.' Farmer Moss walked away; for the boy had no other attendant than Michael!

The doctor found as Michael said—proud flesh gaining in the wound; and he was obliged to put Jem to much pain. He was a sensible man, and a generous man; and, yet more, he was a good man. 'Farmer,' said he (when he came down stairs), 'that boy has been attended like a prince; but he wants surgical care. I shall call every morning this week.' 'You're very good, Sir,' said Farmer Moss coldly.

Jem recovered; and his attachment to Michael was proportioned to his good offices. The horse too recovered; Michael knew of an excellent remedy for broken knees, and privately applied it to the horse: it was a recipe given him by a farrier who liked the boy.—The event passed by, and, by Farmer Moss, as a dream! He had suffered nothing, he had lost nothing; no impression was made: but Jem had promised Michael, if ever he did get well, he would go to church with him, he would say his prayers; and though at the time no right feeling towards God was

impressed, yet the memory of Michael's patient watching, his love, and his prayers, had formed in the boy's mind so strong a conviction of Michael's excellence, and so entirely won his affections, that it was his pleasure to do whatever he thought Michael would approve. The parish marked the change; and every one said, 'That fall has made a man of Jem.' To a lover of the improvement of the lower classes, it would have been grateful to see these two lads daily improving every leisure moment. Michael impressed on Jem's mind this one idea, which will be best seen in the following conversation: 'From five in the morning to six in the evening, time is your master's; from six in the evening to five in the morning, time is your own.'

Michael wrote a good fair hand; he knew four rules of arithmetic, and all his tables perfectly; and he understood something of land-measuring: he was very anxious to impart all he knew to Jem. And as he had no higher principle of action, Michael used that which Jem *could feel*: 'Who knows but you may become a farmer yourself?' When Jem thought on this, his heart always responded, Aye, who knows? 'But you will not do for a farmer, unless you can *read, write, and cipher* well.' And thus, urged by his kind friend, instead of being the first in mischief, he was diligent, and careful to learn the lessons given him from day to day.—It happened that

one fine morning in April, Jem was in the field, and Michael, whose business lay another way, went to ask Jem for a rope he wanted. He was going out of the field, hopeless of finding Jem, when he heard his voice—‘Holla! holla! do you want me?’ and looking whence the sound came, saw Jem sitting under a fine tree, learning the Pence Table.

*Michael.* For shame, Jem!

*Jem.* What’s the matter?

*Michael.* Why, this is what makes the farmers hate learning. Boys, who forget that God sees them, take their *masters’* time to perform their *own* business.

*Jem.* Why now, Michael, what harm? there’s Joe Fuller has been playing heads and tails in the field with the carter, long and long, and you make out as if I committed a sin because I left the cattle a minute to learn this table.

*Michael.* That’s your way, Jem; you are always talking of others: what’s Joe Fuller to me or to you? You are hired to work for your master; you are well fed, decently clothed, and warmly lodged, for which you are required to do every part of your business faithfully.

*Jem.* Well, and don’t I?

*Michael.* Now tell me, Jem, should you wish your master to see you sitting under that tree now?

*Jem.* No, no; I don’t say I should. But—

*Michael.* But what?

*Jem.* You're so mortal particular, that's the worst I know of you.

*Michael.* Tell me, Jem, if your master didn't give you victuals enough, what you would say.

*Jem.* Say! why I'd complain to the parish, as bound me out.

*Michael.* And if you neglect your business?

*Jem.* Master may turn me off; what do I care?

*Michael.* Jem, I've been deceived in you. You make me very unhappy. I did so hope your sickness would have done you good; but your principles are just what they were, I see.

*Jem.* Oh, if I am so very bad, I'm not fit for such a godly young man as you.

Michael took the rope, and left the field without any reply. All his work seemed to have failed, and as he drew near home, he said, 'God only can change the human heart.'

Farmer Moss was a single man. He had one sister, whose husband was a rich farmer, but not so respectable as Farmer Moss. He had feeling; but as soon as the tear was dry, it was over. His habits were bad: though he rose early, he wanted his dram to steady his hand: he did not drink brandy, that destructive liquor; but he had his old beer and his gin-bottle. What at first was a cordial soon became, in his opinion, a necessary of life. Often had his faithful horse brought him

safe home; often had his neat and orderly household watched beneath the porch of their nice dwelling, and heard with pleasure the sure-footed tread of old Grey. But the hour of sorrow came, and the horse could no longer protect his master. It was one of those fine autumnal evenings, when the fervours of summer seem yielding to the cold breath of winter, that old Finch, after leaving the Blue Boar in a state of careless insensibility, mounted his horse in the inn-yard, and said, 'Good bye, my hearty!' to a sot like himself. Three miles did the invaluable beast carry his senseless burthen, over a wretched road, when a tilted cart occupying the middle of the narrow way, the careful animal turned aside to make room: the senseless man had suffered the bridle to escape his hold; the horse stumbled from the depth of the rut; the bridle, loose and long, entangled one leg, and the creature plunging to get free, his rider was thrown to a distance. The bridle broken, the horse ran home, to the terror of his wife, a daughter about sixteen, and a boy of twelve. The people in the cart were humane and discreet: the woman wrapped her shawl round his head, which bled profusely. The man and his two sons helped him into the cart: they turned round, and followed, as far as they could trace it, the guidance of the horse. About a mile from the place where the accident happened, they met the farmer's family running distractedly. They car-

ried him safely home: he was in bed, and a surgeon at his side, in half an hour; it was too late! he breathed a very deep sigh; looked piteously in the face of his wife; wept to see her weep; and, with that only sign of sense, expired.—Mrs. Finch wrote to her brother, and entreated him to come to her. Farmer Moss had just returned to the house to dinner, and was exceedingly shocked by the painful event. He called impatiently for Michael, and the servants were sent to seek him in every direction. He was at length found, and the farmer beckoned him into his little parlour without speaking. Michael was now nineteen, a well-grown lad, steady as a man of five-and-twenty. The farmer looked out of his casement a few minutes, and then turned round. ‘Michael,’ said he, and stopped: the tears ran down his cheeks: ‘Michael, I am very much distressed. I am busy at home, very busy, and my *on-ly* sister, as nice a woman as any in the country, is—*just a widow*. Her boy is a baby as you may say, and his sister but young.’

*Michael.* What can I do, Sir? Can I go?

*Farmer Moss.* No, no, Michael; stay you here; I *must go*. Do you watch *here*. See that my men do their duty.

*Michael.* But, Sir, William’s a deal older than I; he knows better, he has been a long time here, Sir. I thinks as ’twould be better to leave *him* in care.

*Farmer Moss.* Do you do what I bid you ; keep your own place ; but only watch as my men do as they would when I'm here.

*Michael.* Sir, you puts me upon hard duty ; but you are my master ; I *shall* obey you.

The farmer went, and Michael was left in trust. It was Friday, and the wages were to be paid on Sunday morning, and Michael had the amount given him. William, the servant above mentioned, had been one of Michael's secret enemies, because he saw how faithfully he discharged every duty, and that, in order to keep in his master's favour, he must be equally diligent, which, though he was far from a bad servant, was by no means his intention. This circumstance had made him 'fight shy' of Michael, and Michael had no wish to ingratiate himself against his will. But it happened about a fortnight before, William had stayed out, and Michael let him in quietly, and made no mention of it to any one, nor noticed it even to *William*. This occurrence was greatly in Michael's favour : it was, as William thought, good-natured, and kind : it softened him, and he was not at all offended at his master's fixing on Michael to take care in his absence. Jem returned at the usual time to the house, and learned from the servants that their master was gone out and Michael left in care.

Jem had sorely repented of his ingratitude to Michael, and would have given his best coat to be

friends. But what could he say? Pride, that first sin, prevented his speaking; pride made his heart rebel against Michael's power.

The evening closed in; they all went to bed; and Michael, according to his master's private order, burnt a light, and was just asleep, when a slight noise waked him, and by the light of the candle he saw a figure glide by his bed: he jumped out, looked at the windows (well secured by iron bars), and made for the door, having snatched up the candle; then turning the key of the door, he went to William and Jem, and called them to come, related what he had seen, and asked what they would advise? they were all of opinion that it would be best to go back and examine the room: this they did, and, to their astonishment, found Robert, a very worthless boy (for whom the farmer was obliged to find work), whom he never lodged in the house, on account of his dirt and dishonesty. This lad, keen in wrong, who had concluded the light only burnt because people should not think his master out, hoped, therefore, to have stolen in and out unperceived, and possess himself of whatever came to his hand. When he found himself locked in, and that he could not escape by the window, he was in extremity; and when he saw Michael, William, and Jem, enter, he was ready to sink; he knelt, he prayed, and said his master would hang him. 'And so he ought,' said Michael. 'O Lord! O Lord!'

*Michael* : Did you ever call on that name before ?  
 ‘O Lord!’ was all the reply. The three lads withdrew to consult what must be done, having first locked Robert into a closet. They determined to ride over, by daybreak, to Farmer Newton, to consult him. Jem was sent ; and the farmer was at the house by six. They took him up to the boy, who crawled from the closet on his knees with his hands clasped. ‘Oh, Sir, spare me!’ Farmer Newton looked at him : ‘Aye, Robert, this is what I always thought you would come to. How often I have caught you at my hen-roost, at my apple-trees, at every thing those wicked hands could reach ! how often I have heard you lie ! and how constantly I have found you in the streets, on Sunday, at play ! This is what I always thought you would come to.’ And here the boy began to howl again ‘O Lord!’ Farmer Newton said he must be kept a prisoner till Farmer Moss’s return, as *he* must decide on his fate ; and that they must feed him on bread and water. The boys all felt very much for Robert ; and Michael never failed to see him twice in every day, and to counsel him to ask God’s forgiveness. It was Jem’s business to take his food to him ; and never boy had a more merciful gaoler : many a slip of bacon did he put among the bread ; and on Friday morning, the very day the farmer was expected, Jem came running to Michael, out of breath, and saying, ‘Oh, what shall we do ! I

cannot find Robert !' William looked very arch, and said, ' I 'm not a morsel surprised ; it 's just what I expected, and I should not have been surprised if the keeper and his prisoner had gone off together.' Jem was greatly enraged, and was about to declare, by all that was good and holy, that he knew nothing of the matter, when a look from Michael made him red as scarlet. ' Well, he has escaped,' said this steady boy, ' and, provided he changes for the better, I really cannot be sorry ; for though I certainly would not have assisted him, it has been a very painful circumstance to me. One piece of advice I shall, however, take the liberty of giving *you*, Jem—never from this day to know that boy ; it may involve you in misery you have little notion of.' This was said in the gravest and most distant manner, and it went to Jem's heart. In the evening of that day he came to Michael, and the following conversation took place.

*Jem.* Can I speak to you, Michael ?

*Michael.* Certainly, Jem.

*Jem.* Are you still angry with me ?

*Michael.* I certainly have not forgotten that you think me too godly for you ; and while the law of righteousness is not obeyed by you, I hope I am too much and too steadily resolved to do my duty, to choose you for my friend.

*Jem.* Then you have done with me ?

*Michael.* I rather think *you* have done with

*me*: you are tired of the restraints of honesty, and prefer loose company.

*Jem*. No, indeed, I never loved you so well in all the time I have known you. But—

*Michael*. But what, Jem?

*Jem*. But you have not spoken to *me* since Master went.

*Michael*. I think you forget. I have spoken to you, whenever there was need, with temper, and without resentment; but I do not find even the Bible requiring us to pursue those who wish to avoid us.

*Jem*. I am sure I never *did* wish that; but I thought you had got grand and stately with your master's setting you over us, and I am sure you need not think I disliked you to govern, for I never minded *that* at all.

Michael looked steadily on Jem. He knew this was not true. He had heard him talking to Cicely in the dairy, and in a manner which shewed that the orders the farmer had given were offensive to his pride. Jem blushed as Michael looked, and Michael replied to that blush, 'You had better say no more, you have no right to account to me for how you felt. This honour I never desired, 'tis a post of care, and as your master comes home to-day, your vexation will soon be at an end.' Jem was hurt, and he did not know what to say, Michael had always been so very kind to him. He went up stairs for a pair of dry stockings;

and as he opened his box, these words met his eye, which Michael had printed on the inside of his box, when he first recovered: 'For, lo! thou requirest truth in the inward parts;' and when he saw it, he thought on the two lies of which Michael's eye had convicted him; and instead of falling on his knees, to ask God's forgiveness, he listened to the wickedness of his own heart, and the evil suggestions of him who goeth about as a roaring lion: he said thus with himself: 'I know Michael is very good, I shall never be like him; I never will be a hypocrite, why should I? After all, he is fond of government: how gravely he strutted about when master was away! It was, 'James, be sure you do not waste the hay; give the cattle enough, but do not let them pull it down and waste it: be sure your cattle are well rubbed down. James, your keys. James, have you cleaned the pigeon-house? James, I have looked at the sty, and I fear the pigs will not thrive if you do not keep them cleaner: I used to scrub them when I lived at P.; and every body admired our pork.' Scrub pigs, indeed! scrub pigs! Not I; 'tis enough dirty work I have to do without scrubbing pigs.' But hearing one or two persons talk loudly, Jem altered his manner, fearing his anger might appear; and quickly putting on his stockings, he went down. His master was indeed arrived, and appeared very ill; but he looked kind. He called all his men about him, and thanked each one singly

for their very kind services in his absence, and after looking as if he missed some one, said, 'Aye, Robert—where 's Robert?'

*Michael.* Robert has run away, Sir.

*Farmer.* Very good news, Michael : I'm only afraid he 'll be back soon.

*Michael.* I don't think he will, Sir.

*Farmer.* Well, well, I believe no one will look after him : I never shall, you may depend on't.

Michael and William agreed it would be best to let the matter rest ; and not a word was said. The next day being Saturday, in the evening came the men for their wages. 'Well, what now?' said Farmer Moss. Cicely, who was just lighting up a sconce that was over the old chimney in the great kitchen, turned round, 'Ees, ees ; new lords, new ways : this is Lord Michael's way.' 'And a very excellent way too,' said Farmer Moss, 'and in future it shall be my way.' This silenced Cicely, whose spite against Michael arose from his stopping her as she was singing a very indelicate song, and warning her that no modest girl could take pleasure in such words as these, and he hoped never to hear such come out of her mouth again. She did not see the harm, she said ; and she believed he wanted to turn the house into a Methodist meeting ; and she dare say he would buy the song himself if he could see it ; aye, and sing it too if he had a voice : and she would never mind such boys as him, she could tell him.

This volley of nonsense met no attention whatever, Michael was out of hearing before it was half finished. Cicely was a very good servant, without any education, with a pretty face, and very bold manners. Michael had never liked her; and though he saw her very industrious, he had taken care never to say more to her than was absolutely necessary. Once he offered to give her a tract to read: she tossed it down, and said, 'I reads none, I ha' somewhat else to do:' and, with a sniff of her nose, she banged the door after her, and began to call her chickens. Michael quite despaired of doing her the slightest good, and therefore seldom said any word to her beyond what necessity required. As Cicely never could charge him with any thing contrary to his duty, she began to hate him, and to indulge in private conversation with Jem, or any one who would listen: she even tried at Johanna, the little girl she had under her, but Johanna was very slow of comprehension; and as Michael had taken pains to help Johanna in her reading, she used to hear Cicely abuse him with wonder, and stand staring at her with her mouth wide open, till Cicely could no longer contain her passion, and drove the frightened child out of the dairy, calling out, 'Why won't you mind your *business*, hussy?' with her hands clenched as if she would strike her. Farmer Moss having heard the whole conversation, said, 'I think, Cicely, it can never be her business, nor yours, to speak so

very ill of so very excellent a lad as Michael.' 'Well, Sir, the sooner I goes the better ; one roof won't do long for Mr. Michael Kemp and me.' 'Very well, Cicely ; Mr. Michael Kemp, as you are pleased to call him, will soon be far from us : perhaps you may be able to bear with his worth and honest goodness a few days longer.' Cicely looked down and walked away, and Johanna, with her mouth open, walked after her. Farmer Moss called Michael to him, and after expressing complete satisfaction with his services, asked him if he would be willing to serve the orphan and the widow, 'Sir,' said Michael, 'I should think it the greatest honour to serve those for whom God expresses such particular care ; but how can I be of any use ?' 'You shall go to my sister, I promised her I would spare you. I said, and I said truly, I should miss you ; but remember, Michael, I shall always be very happy to see you. I shall, I hope, remember many things which once made me angry. I do not wish you to go for a fortnight, as I must be looking for some one to fill your place.' Michael was extremely pleased with the farmer's speech, and hoped the present affecting circumstances would soften his prejudices, and be the means of bringing him to a happy state of mind. He expressed a wish that he might be permitted to visit his parents for a couple of days. 'Certainly, certainly,' said the farmer, 'they *must*, they *must* want to see you ;' and then, in a lower

key, 'if I had such a boy, I am sure I should.' Mrs. Finch had opened her heart to her brother, and shown him the state of her affairs: 'I see, I see how it is, sister; you have a very large bundle of fagots on your shoulders, and no one to tie them up. I'll send you a man who shall put all your affairs in place. I see your stable is in disorder, your stacks are half thatched, your, your ——' 'Yes, brother, I know it; but remember, my poor husband is hardly cold, and till he took to drinking, never was a kinder husband: and then he was so fond of the children.' 'Well,' said Moss, 'you are a good creature. God rest his soul! I'll send you a man shall put all to rights;' and so they parted.—After Moss had been at home two or three days, Farmer Newton came riding into the court, and Jem, who was passing, took the horse. 'Is the farmer at home?' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Is the boy in gaol?' 'No, Sir.' 'What does your master mean to do with him?' 'He has run away.' 'Who helped him out of that strong closet?' Jem did not speak out, but thinking it necessary to say something, observed, 'It was a very strong closet, indeed, Sir.'

Moss went out to meet Farmer Newton. 'Poor brother-in-law's gone to Heaven, I hope.' 'Why I should hope so too, but it's an awkward thing to go to Heaven in a drunken fit. And so, Farmer, your boy Robert got out of prison.' 'Prison! did you say?' 'Yes, I saw him very safe, did I not,

Michael?’ ‘Yes, Sir, I thought so.’ ‘What is all this?’ said Farmer Moss: ‘prison!’ ‘Yes, Sir,’ said Michael; ‘we thought you could do no good, and as he had escaped—and your mind was so anxious about your sister—’ The story being related, he concluded as before, ‘I believe no one will ever run after him, I’m sure I never shall.’

## CHAPTER II.

MICHAEL GOES TO SEE HIS PARENTS.—HIS MASTER SENDS PRESENTS BY HIM TO HIS PARENTS.—SEVERAL PLEASANT INTERVIEWS DESCRIBED.—MICHAEL RECEIVES PRESENTS FROM THE REV. MR. WALKER AND HIS FAMILY.—RETURNS TO HIS MASTER'S HOUSE.—REFUTES THE CALUMNIES OF A SECRET ENEMY.—MICHAEL AND JEM WALK TO THE OLD RECTORY HOUSE.—THEIR CONVERSATION.—CHARACTER OF THE LATE MADAM LASCELLES (WIFE OF THE FORMER RECTOR OF H.)—A STRANGER INQUIRES OF MICHAEL FOR A NIGHT'S LODGING.—MICHAEL APPLIES TO HIS MASTER, WHO RECEIVES HIM WITH HOSPITALITY.—THE STRANGER MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN AS A SON OF THE RESPECTED MADAM LASCELLES.—MICHAEL ATTENDS HIM TO THE OLD RECTORY HOUSE, HIS INTENDED FUTURE RESIDENCE.

It was on a bright October morning that Michael set off to see his father. Farmer Moss, that he might lose no time, lent him a nice little pony, and at parting gave him a small parcel in brown paper, which he charged him not to open till he got to P. How many delightful ideas occupied the heart of this good young man! As he rode under the shade of the trees, he felt that God was his father, and that all the beauties of nature were His creation: the singing of the birds harmonized his thoughts; his soul was alive to the finest feelings of love to God and enjoyment of natural beauty. He proceeded silently till he came to the toll-gate at the entrance of P. As he drew near

he saw his invaluable friend, Mr. Walker, who would have passed him had not Michael pulled off his hat, got down from his pony, and said, 'Sir!' with a voice almost choked by his feelings of delight. Mr. Walker stopped. 'Did you speak to me, Sir?' 'Oh, dear Sir,' said Michael, 'do you not remember me? do you not remember Michael Kemp?' 'Oh, my honest Michael, I have never forgotten you; but long absence has added to your growth and lengthened your boyish countenance, and you must excuse an old man who expected nothing so little as the pleasure of seeing you.' 'Oh, Sir! what do I not owe to you! how can I ever repay you!' 'Keep your eye fixed, my good lad, keep your heart warm, by daily perusal of the Scriptures; be lowly, be content to be despised, so that you are owned, and honoured, and approved of God: this will give me more pleasure than any news you could bring me, more than any kind office you could perform for me.' Mr. Walker gave Michael his hand, and pressed his affectionately: 'Shall we see you to-morrow, or next day?' 'To-morrow, if you please, Sir.' Mr. Walker waved his hand and passed on.

And now Michael came to the turning that led to his home. A tall girl met him, whose face he thought he knew: she looked at him, blushed, and passed on. He entered the cottage of his father, and found only a cradle and a little child rocking it; and taking a chair, without speaking,

sat down. The little girl who was rocking, began to cry, 'Mammy, mammy ! come, come, here is a man.' The mother came down, and Michael could not refrain, but rose, and threw his arms round her neck : 'Oh, my dear mother !' 'Is it my Michael ? is it ?' 'Yes, it is indeed ; and where is my father ?' 'Oh ! child, sit down, he 'll be in presently.' 'And Joseph and little Jane ? and where is Fanny ?' 'Why Fanny 's just gone up the lane—oh ! what a pleasure it is to me, my dear boy, to see you once more.' Michael now thought on the little parcel his master had given him ; and when he opened it, he found a shawl for his mother and a red silk handkerchief for his father, and two one-pound notes, folded in a piece of paper and written on the outside, 'For the parents of my honest servant, Michael Kemp.' 'Oh !' said his mother, 'this is a gift indeed !' and running up stairs, she knelt down, and thanked God, who had given her such a friend ; and, above all, that had kept her child from sin, and given him favour in the sight of his master. Michael knew how his mother was employed, and their joint thanksgivings ascended together.

Before his mother came down, his father returned : he hung up his hat, and Michael looked at him with honest affection ; but his father not expecting him, rather wondered to see so decent a lad sitting there, and his wife up stairs. 'A fine day,' said Joseph. 'Yes, Sir,' said Michael. His

father sat down and leaned his head on his hand, little inclined to talk. 'Is that your pony, Sir,' said he, 'that hangs to our rail?' 'O dear, yes: pray, father, where had I best put him up?' 'Father!' 'O yes: why don't you know me?' 'Can it be our boy Michael?' 'I am, indeed, your own boy Michael, my dear father—' 'Good honest boy, 'tis long since ye've been here:' and the fond parent looked steadily out at the window, to hide the emotions he could not stifle. 'I think, lad, thee shouldst put up at the Lion, the landlady was good to your mother when John was born.'

Michael took the bridle and led his horse to the Lion. As he went up the yard, Mrs. Potter bustled out at the passage-door: 'Sir, I am afeard as our hostler's out—' 'Oh, I will see after him myself, Mrs. Potter, for I am at my father's, just by.' 'Indeed, Sir!' 'Yes, I am at Joseph Kemp's.' 'Oh, Sir—indeed, Sir!—' (eyeing him from head to foot). He went on, but Mrs. Potter resolved to wait his return: 'Pray may I ask is your name Michael Kemp?' 'Yes, Madam, my name is Michael Kemp: I am come to see my father and mother, my master has been so very kind as to lend me his horse: and I am much obliged to you, Madam, for your kindness to my mother.' 'Aye, poor body! I did what I could, and I'm very glad she has got so stout.' Michael made his bow, and Mrs. Potter nodded familiarly, when she found that the uncommon good-looking young gentle-

man, who brought his horse to their stable, was only a poor boy as you may say. Michael always thought himself a poor boy, so this change of manner did not hurt him. He went back to his father and mother: and Elizabeth Kemp, that she might have her dear child quiet to herself, laid her cloth in a neat upper room, where her children slept; and the whole family, once collected, found much to say.

‘And so, Michael, you are got too grand to speak to Fanny, she says.’ ‘Oh, where is she, my dear father? I do so long to see her.’ ‘She is only in the next room, smartening up a bit: these foolish girls think they must be loved the better for fine clothes. Madam Walker has given her a very nice cotton gown, bran new, and she must needs put it on.’ Fanny was soon dressed, and soon in her brother’s arms. ‘My own Michael!’ ‘My own Fanny!’ ‘How you are altered, and how you are grown! Well, I hope you are come to stay a *long* time.’ ‘Oh, no, my dear sister, only to-day and to-morrow; I have promised my master to be at home on ‘Thursday.’ They all looked sorry, but no one spoke a word of persuasion: it was his duty to return, and ‘Servants, obey your masters,’ was a reply in every one’s mind. The hours flew, and would fly; and next morning Michael went to the Rectory. The rector was in his study: Michael was shown in. Mr. W. took off his spectacles, wiped them with his glove,

walked towards Michael, and, half bowing, said, 'It gives me great pleasure, young man, to find the character you bear so respectable; that you have not disappointed the pleasing hopes I have ever entertained concerning you. A particular friend of mine has informed me of your decent and Christian conduct; and I trust you find the fulfilment of the promise, 'They that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.''

Michael bowed: he was so happy to hear that Mr. Walker approved him, and his heart was so full, that he could only bow, he could *not* speak. They both waited a little; and when calm was restored, Mr. Walker said, 'Sit down, young man. Are you in a Christian family?' 'I think not: my master is very kind to me, Sir.' 'Well, that is good, kindness is a great thing. Is he prejudiced against religious people?' 'I never heard him say much. He was not at all pleased with me at first.' Here Michael related all that had passed: Jem's illness, &c. 'I am very much pleased you did not come away: a cross well carried is a blessing in the end. I hope, my young friend, you have the presence of God.' 'Sir, I have that sunshine in my soul, as I can never describe! Oh! how long it is since I have heard such a question as that!'

*Mr. W.* Then you have no religious friend to speak to?

*Michael.* No, Sir.

*Mr. W.* This must be a great trial to you.

*Michael.* I believe, Sir, it is best for me.

*Mr. W.* How so?

*Michael.* I think, Sir, God has led me through the wilderness to humble and to prove me, and to show me what is in my heart. Perhaps if I could have talked, as you have given me such good instruction, I might have been puffed up : but my religion has not made me acceptable, Sir, where I live, but as it kept me honest and moral. I should have been better approved at first if I had not read my Bible so much. But, for the last year, I have often seen my master look over a chapter, though if he saw me he would cough and hem, and ask some indifferent questions about the cattle or the farm ; so I never pretended to see it, though I often pray in my heart that some Scripture might strike him ; for the Word of God is quick and powerful, I know.

*Mr. W.* Have you a moral clergyman ?

*Michael.* Yes, Sir ; but he preaches above us. I really believe no one in the congregation can understand him ; but many say he is *very fine*. He sometimes talks of the stars, sometimes tells us of the philosophers, and many other things I cannot remember ; and once, when a very clear, plain preacher came to preach a charity sermon, and said, in the course of it, if a little child was to scatter the bread which its father gave it to little hungry birds, and to deny itself, how pleased would the parent be with its kindness and self-

denial : how much more will the Father which is in heaven approve and reward such as deny self, to scatter to their fellow-creatures the bounties of his providence : I was very much contented with this sermon ; but when I came home, the first word I heard was, ‘ William, didst thee ever hear such a sermon about bread, and little children, and the birds ? ’ ‘ No, Sir,’ said William, ‘ I can’t say as ever I did.’ The farmer replied, ‘ I thinks ’tis mighty silly to tell of the little children and the birds.’ ‘ Lauk, Sir, I think so too ; we knows about that, I thinks, pretty nigh as well as the parson : people need not go the Varsity to learn that.’

*Mr. W.* Such is the ignorance of most men, that they do not consider plainness of speech a necessary qualification in a country clergyman, but sit still the half-hour, gaping at what they cannot understand ; some sleeping, some looking about ; and far the greater part come home as wise and as little changed as they went out.

*Michael.* It is very true, Sir.

*Mr. W.* It has been my study, ever since I came into the country, to speak so that farmers might clearly understand me. I hope it is not vanity to say I am a scholar ; but to win a soul to God is of such infinite importance, that the *mere* display of human learning ought never to be a *primary* object with the clergy ; though, my young friend, learning, which helps to throw light on the Word of God, is certainly of great importance.

*Michael.* I hope, Sir, you will excuse my boldness in speaking of myself, but I have reason to be very thankful that you *did* speak plain : I could always understand you ; and I came home every Sunday night, with something new to guide me, and to do me good.

Mrs. Walker tapped at the study door. ‘Walk in,’ said Mr. W. ‘Well, Mr. Michael, I’m glad to see you : there is *such pleasure* in seeing you young boys getting on respectably, that I cannot help coming in expressly to look at you, and to invite you into the library to see the young folks, for whom you have so often picked blackberries. They have never forgotten your kindness. How long do you stay at P.?’

*Michael.* I must go early to-morrow, Madam.

Mr. and Mrs. Walker led the way to the library ; and Michael waited respectfully till Mrs. W. said, ‘Sophia, that is our good boy, Michael Kemp, who used to help sweep the path to church : we must call him Mr. Michael, I think, he is so grown.’

*Michael.* Oh no, Madam ; I hope never to be any thing but Michael with you.

Miss Sophia said she was very happy to see him looking so well, and Master Edmund (a very elegant young lad) assured him he could never forget the many civilities and kindnesses he had received from him.—A tray with cold meats was set, but Michael could not be prevailed on to eat

in their presence: he withdrew amidst the good wishes, prayers, and smiles of Mr. and Mrs. Walker and their young family. After he was gone, Mr. W. observed to his wife, what a change true religion makes in the appearance and manners: that young man could not have behaved with greater propriety, had he received a very superior education.

Thursday morning came; and as Michael took his horse from the Lion stables, Mr. Walker's footman delivered a parcel: it contained a Bible and Testament, small and neatly bound, a present from Mr. Walker; Olney Hymns, from Mrs. Walker; Pilgrim's Progress, from Miss Sophia; and a volume of his father's Sermons, from Master Edmund. The good boy could scarce repress his tears, from the gratitude he felt; he offered his duty to Mr. Walker and his grateful thanks. When the servant was gone, he turned to Mrs. Potter and begged she would tell him what he could do to serve her in any way, and assured her of his gratitude for past kindnesses. She said, 'As for poor boys, she did not see how they could serve her; and when you have paid for the keep of your horse, Michael Kemp, I fancy you may'nt have much to give to the landlady at the Lion.' Michael was hurt, for two reasons: Mrs. Potter was offended at what he had intended as a mark of his gratitude; and she had certainly taken more liquor than was good for her. He was grieved; and after

paying seven shillings and sixpence, which was half-a-crown more than he expected, for the keep of his horse, he went once more to the humble dwelling of his father and family, to beg they would never go to the Lion for any assistance, as he did not like Mrs. Potter; above all, whatever they might think it right to send for, never to let Fanny go: and then he asked what she had done that was so very kind? The mother looked at the father, and the father at the mother, and seemed to hesitate; and then the mother said, 'My dear Michael, she lent me five shillings: I paid her yesterday, my love, out of the money you brought.' 'My dear mother, never do borrow again of any body but me.' And giving his horse to his father, he ran back to the rectory and begged a moment's conversation with Mr. Walker. 'Will you, Sir, excuse the liberty I take? but I have been rather uneasy about my parents: they borrowed five shillings of Mrs. Potter, at the Lion, when my brother John was born. My mother *has* paid it, but I do not quite like the looks of Mrs. Potter; and I should be glad, Sir, if they are ever in want, if you would lend them a trifle, and I shall pay you with a most grateful heart.' 'My good young man, you may depend upon me.' 'I know, Sir, why my mother could not ask you: you have always been so very kind, that she thought it would look like begging.' Once more Michael bowed to Mr. Walker, and returned to his parents: and

now the parting moment came, and the poor lad looked through his tears at nature's beauties for the first five miles of his journey.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when Michael Kemp reached his master's house: every one seemed glad to see him; even Cicely was civil, and Jem was honestly delighted. The farmer, who came in from his neighbour, Farmer Newton's, said, 'Well, lad, I'm glad to see thee home.' Michael presented his mother's duty, and his father's duty, and their grateful thanks. It was one part of this good lad's character, that he had a very quick sense of obligation, and every favour was felt deeply, and never forgotten; and his master's presents to his parents had greatly endeared his master to him: indeed all his late conduct had been so very kind, that he could not think of leaving him without real sorrow.

While he was in the yard, cleaning his bridle and saddle, ere he put them in the saddle-house, Jem being in the dairy, helping to churn, he heard Cicely say, 'Well, Jem, do you know how long my lord is to stay here?' 'No, indeed, not I, Cicely.' 'Do you know, Jem, I heard him praying last night: and I heard un say as he wished for favour in the eyes.' 'Favour in the eyes, favour in the eyes, Cicely: what *do* you mean?' 'I'm sure I don't know, but that's what I heard him say.—It's my belief, Jem, you're afraid of Michael.' 'Not I, indeed! but I must say, he did

nurse me so kindly, and so well, that I cannot quite forget it: and though he *is* masterly, and takes on him, I cannot help liking him.' 'Well, for my part, I *never did* like him, and I believe as Master's greatly deceived in him, and so I shall tell Master if he affronts me again.' *Jem.* 'What can you say against him? nothing true, I'm sure; and I'll stand up for him before king and country: 'twould be a fine thing for thee, girl, if thou wert half as good, if thou wert half as good, half as good, as good, as good' [singing loud and strong]. Michael heard Cicely abusing Jem, who only laughed, and went on singing 'half as good,' till Cicely was ready to beat him: at last, out ran Jem, and Cicely after him, he laughing, and she screaming with passion. Michael drew off, put by the saddle, and went to his ordinary work. In the evening, when all the servants were at supper in the hall, and the farmer taking his ale by the fire, Michael rose and said, 'Sir, I believe Cicely has something she wishes to communicate to you respecting me; and as it is your intention to confide to me the interest of your sister's children, ere I quit this place I should be glad all my conduct should be examined before witnesses. Cicely, whatever you know of me speak now.' Cicely tossed her head, and said she didn't know as she should. The farmer said, 'If you pay any attention, Michael, to that stupid girl, you are to blame: I do not mean to keep her, because I *know*

her. I'll protect you against her tongue, depend on me. And I advise you, Cicely, to take care how you give away my butter to your own family; for if ever I catch you again, as I did last Tuesday, stopping a full hour at the end of the green lane, I'll carry the law to the extent against you: for this once I pass it by, on one condition, that you ask pardon of that honest lad for all your lies.' Cicely muttered a reluctant request, and Michael sat down. The girl's passion was so strong, that she screamed, and fell on the floor in an hysterical fit: the farmer ordered Jem and William to place her quietly in her own room, and leave her till her fury should cool. Michael was perpetually listening at the foot of the stairs; and hearing no sound, he begged his master would let Johanna go and see how she was: the poor girl came down, and said Cicely was gone to bed, and seemed very well. The men all laughed, and the house rested for the night.

On the following Sunday, after church, Jem being smartly dressed, with his posy in his button-hole and a little switch in his hand, stood cutting off the heads of nettles, poised on one leg as though he was waiting for somebody. Michael looked round, and was walking home, when the thought struck him that he would ask Jem to give him his company that evening; so, turning to Jem, he said, 'Will you give me your company this evening? I go on Thursday; and I shall

have very little time, after this day, to speak to you.' James was rather at a loss, for he had promised to go and spend the evening at a place where a parcel of silly boys and girls met on a Sunday, and Michael had often advised him not to go. He could not refuse this request; and colouring very high, he said, 'Oh, yes, yes, *certainly*;' so he ran up to a tawdry girl, of no very good character, saying, 'Sally, do you tell Mrs. Priddel I can't come to-day.' 'And why not?' 'Oh I *can't*.' 'What I suppose you and Mr. Michael be going to sing a stave together in the stable;' and she ran off, tossing a broken old feather about in her ragged bonnet, and laughing. 'Sing away, Jem; you'll never sing younger.' Jem's passion was rising, and had not Michael been there, the oath in his heart would have escaped him.

*Michael.* I hope, Jem, you are not *really* hurt at that very foolish shabby-looking girl, with whom I think you would be ashamed to walk: her dirty hands peep through those ragged old gloves.

James was rather relieved by Michael's description of Sally, and was glad he had not gone with her; and joining Michael, they walked together to the fish-ponds, under the double row of elms which led to the untenanted rectory. They enjoyed the cool yet pleasant breeze. Michael's first object was to express the real regard he felt for Jem, and then to engage him upon more important subjects.

*Michael.* We have lived together four years, I think, Jem?

*Jem.* Yes, four years last Lady-day, I think.

*Michael.* On Thursday I leave: I hope you won't forget me.

*Jem.* No, no, that I never shall! 'twould be strange indeed as I should: you have been kinder to me than any body, except my poor old grandmother.

*Michael.* Where did your grandmother live?

*Jem.* Why, bless your heart, she lived just by that knot of trees there, where Judd, the carpenter, lives now: she was as clean a body and as decent to look to: she would not have let me out at the door without hat and handkerchief; and 'pick your way, boy,' was the last word out, and 'rub your shoes' was the last word in, so that I did never know what it was to be dirty while grandmother lived.

*Michael.* Do you think she would have approved of your walking with Sally?

*Jem.* Oh, no, I'm sure she would have been quite sorry to have seen me with such a girl as that. She always went to see Madam Lascelles every Sacrament Sunday, and Madam used to talk as free.

*Michael.* Who was Madam Lascelles?

*Jem.* Why she was the rector's wife, and as grand an old lady as ever I seed. I remember her

very well; she gave me the Prayer-Book I shewed you.

*Michael.* How long has she been dead?

*Jem.* Why I lived a year at Farmer Newton's, and then I went to live at the Grange, and there I had the fever, and was bad a long time in the hospital; and when I got well, I came here. I came here a year before you.

*Michael.* Well, then, I suppose your grandmother might be alive three years after Mrs. Lascelles died.

*Jem.* I suppose she might. I remember hearing her say as 'twas a shame a boy ten years old could not read, and read well too. I remembers Madam's funeral, 'twas very grand; I had a fine dinner that day, and all the poor had five shillings a-piece. There was all her family there: there was Colonel Lascelles, and Madam's son; there was Sir James Winslow and seven of Madam's little grandchildren; there was four coaches, all black, beside the hearse; and there was yellow and green coaches, and two brown ones, all shut up, nobody in 'em. I thought they were shut up because the people inside were crying, but there was nobody there. All the village cried, because Madam used to walk about and do a power of good; and I have heard the people say she was main rich, and as her father was quite a lord, but I'm sure I don't know.

*Michael.* Your poor grandmother must have been very sorry.

*Jem.* Sorry indeed she was: she went up to the burying, and took me with her; and when it was over she went away, and I heard her say, 'Oh, my best friend!' But, Michael, I never shall forget a tall gray-headed gentleman who came up to the grave: he had on a black cloak; he was very handsome; he looked into the grave, and said, '*Best of women!*' and then he took his handkerchief and hid his face, and got into the green coach and went quite away. Dr. Lascelles never preached after Madam died; he only lived a little while, and that house has been shut up ever since.

*Michael.* Can you tell me, did our master like Mrs. Lascelles?

*Jem.* I don't justly know, for my grandmother never talked about any body: but I have heard master say that the poor have given him more trouble since Madam Lascelles's death than ever he had before.

*Michael.* Have you heard your master say so lately?

*Jem.* Why, no. Master seems to have got a feeling of late. I heard the people say as master was got good, so good as they thought he could not live; but I thinks master's very kind, and I never thinks he'll die any the more for that.

*Michael.* You are right: if a happy change has taken place in our master, there is no doubt but he may be spared, and he may become a real blessing to this village.

By this time they had strayed to the coach-gates of the nice old rectory; and while they stood, Jem said, 'Michael, should you like to see the old place?'

*Michael.* I really should.

*Jem.* Oh, then, I will run to my uncle's, the clerk; and I am sure he would let you have the key: he rents the garden of Dr. Collis, and 'tis a very good thing for him; and my aunt just comes in summer and opens the windows to keep things aired; but they as remembers when things were in prime order, says as 'tis very melancholy to see it. I have heard my grandmother talk of the beautiful library, and how one of the windows of Madam Lascelles's dressing-room was covered with a beautiful myrtle, always matted up all the winter.

Jem ran off to ask his uncle for the key, and Michael went into a little harbour, took out his Bible, and was reading that beautiful portion of the Scriptures, the 91st Psalm. Michael was thinking over his own conduct. It was Sunday: he had stopped Jem from going out, because he wanted to talk with him; and how had he talked? There was nothing wrong, it was true; but what

had either of them gained? And then he had sent Jem to fetch the key of the rectory, and to Michael's tender conscience it seemed at best an *idle* way of spending a sabbath evening. While he thus examined himself, he thought he heard some one call him, and looking up, saw a gentleman, who addressed him—'Pray, young man, can you tell me if there is any house in this village where I could get a bed? Particular circumstances call me into this neighbourhood. I have been to see a dying friend; and here I linger, for here I had once a most beloved relative, now, alas! no more. Do you know any place where I could sleep?' Michael was so struck with the look, voice, and manner of the stranger, that he, for awhile, forgot to answer. At length he said, 'Sir, my master would, I doubt not, be very willing to offer you a bed. I know there is no place in this village fit for such a gentleman, but I will run home, if you please, and inform my master.' 'May I ask you, young man, what brought you to rest in this spot?' Michael frankly related facts, and closed saying, 'Indeed, Sir, I am sure I am wrong in thinking of going over this house to-night, from no better a motive than idle curiosity.' The stranger looked benevolently, but made no reply.

Michael ran home to his master, who instantly answered the request in the affirmative, put on his

hat, and walked to the rectory. There he found Jem, with the key of the house, looking this way and that, to find Michael.

*Moss.* Well, Jem, what do you want?

*Jem.* Nothing, Sir.

*Moss.* Who are you looking after?

*Jem.* Nobody, Sir.

*Moss.* What are you doing with those keys?

*Jem.* Nothing, Sir.

The stranger turned to the farmer. 'I believe, Sir, I can tell you what that lad seems at a loss to explain: he is looking for a very pleasing young man, who has just run home to get me a bed, and he brought those keys to shew him the house.' Jem looked astonished and ashamed. The stranger turned towards him: 'Truth is so *lovely*, young man, and so respectable, that I hope you will remember the advice I give you: never depart from it, be the consequences ever so much to be dreaded. He who requires it in the inward parts will, if you obey his command, 'make you to understand wisdom secretly.'" Then, addressing Farmer Moss, 'I presume, Sir, you are the master of these lads?' 'Yes, Sir,' said Moss, taking off his hat; 'and I came here, Sir, to beg you will do me the honour to accept a bed at my house.' 'I am greatly obliged, Sir, and shall certainly accept your offer: I am later than I intended. Perhaps you may remember me?' The Farmer looked: 'If not, you certainly *do* remember my dear

mother, the wife of your late rector.' 'Madam Lascelles, Sir?' 'Yes.' 'Oh, who can forget her?' 'Well, Sir, at the time of my father's death I preferred the army; and my uncle, in whose gift this preferment was, gave it to the late Dr. Collis, who is just gone.' The farmer started: 'Dr. Collis, Sir?' 'Yes: I have just left his house masterless, and his respectable family of sisters and servants drowned in tears. I come to look at the old spot, and I purpose to reside here. I have occupied a small vicarage, as curate to a friend; and now return to the place where I drew my first breath. Such are mortal changes!'

By this time they reached the farm. Tea was offered and accepted, and all the civilities Moss could think of. Mr. Lascelles sat down and took a book from his pocket, while the farmer opened his great Family Bible, and Michael with Jem sat quietly in the bedroom: they were both full of the praises of the new rector, and Jem thought him a very grand-looking man, and like Madam Lascelles. Michael added, 'He appears to me a good man.'

*Jem.* Y-e-s, I th-in-ks he is.

*Michael.* Now, Jem, I want you to promise me three things.

*Jem.* Which be they?

*Michael.* Come, Jem, let's have no jesting with things serious.

*Jem.* What am I to promise?

*Michael.* First, never to know Robert ; next, never to be intimate with Cicely ; and last, never to undertake any thing of importance without prayer : will you promise me ?

*Jem.* I think I could promise never to know Robert ; only, poor thing ! he ha'ant got no friends, and 'twould look proud if I wa'ant to know him. As for Cicely, I am sure I don't care for her ; she is a passionate woman, I never minds what she says : I thinks as I could promise that. But then, about praying, why 'tis a thing I was never particular fond of, and I am new to 't as it were : I would not like to promise and not to keep to 't.

*Michael.* I like your care, Jem ; sincerity is indeed an excellent virtue. But I will give you my reason for asking these promises : first, I think you do not always speak the truth ; and Robert is a sad liar, and he is a thief too ; and if he should get you into any scrape, you might suffer more than you are aware of by keeping such company : and as for Cicely, you heard what your master charged her with.

*Jem.* Yes, I did ; and 'twas no news to me, I can tell you.

*Michael.* I hope you will never keep any secrets, to the injury of your master.

*Jem.* Why, as for that, if I promised to keep a secret, 'tis not the 'quisition as should get that out of me : no, I never makes mischief.

*Michael.* But you help to do it, if you do not expose robbery when you know it ; you are guilty yourself, and may one day be hanged for it.

*Jem.* La, la, Michael, do you want me to turn informer ?

*Michael.* Suppose those traveling gipsies we watch for was to carry off a whole brood of fine chickens, if you knew where they were, should you think it making mischief to tell your master ?

*Jem.* I ? no, I should not.

*Michael.* Suppose your master was to take one into his house, and give him a good bed to sleep on, and pay him reasonable wages, and he was to give the eggs to his gang—

*Jem.* Well, suppose he did ?

*Michael.* Should you think it wrong to tell your master ?

*Jem.* Not I, indeed.

*Michael.* Why ?

*Jem.* Because, if master had taken him in, he ought to be more obliged and more careful.

*Michael.* Certainly ; and pray ought not Cicely ?

*Jem.* Dear, what a roundabout way you comes over me !

*Michael.* Now I'll tell you, Jem, the secret of Cicely's dislike to me. She wastes a great deal in this house : she is clean, but she is always in a hurry to get work over : she puts her salt in a damp tub ; she leaves it in the dairy while she

throws the water down, she should move it : when she makes her butter, she never shuts her churn close, which wastes a great deal of cream : and, to save trouble, the cooked meat is kept in the dairy ; so that our cream turns sooner than any in the parish. I think Cicely might be a very excellent servant if she did by her master as she would wish her master to do by her. Our Saviour gave us excellent rules, James.

*Jem.* O, I dare say he did.

*Michael.* I hope you know he did ?

*Jem.* Why, as to that, you know I never professes to be so over religious.

Michael felt the conversation getting very unprofitable, and said, ' Well, here's my Hymn Book ; perhaps you would like to read a bit, or shall I read to you ? ' Jem, who was quite tired out, gaped so wide as to show the whole double row of a good set of teeth, ' Just as you like. ' Michael read, ' How shall the young secure their hearts, ' &c. They were reading the third verse, when William said, master had ordered all the servants into the great hall : the carter was there and Johanna, but they could not find Cicely ; and Jem and Michael must come directly.

It is necessary to inform the reader that when Michael and Jem were conversing together, and Mr. Lascelles and the farmer sitting peaceably by the fire, Cicely set off for Mrs. Priddel's. Mr. Lascelles at length put his book in his pocket,

and turning to Farmer Moss, said, 'It is eight o'clock, Sir; will it be convenient to you to call your family together?' 'My family, Sir? I'm a lone man, Sir; I have nobody but servants about me.' Mr. Lascelles smiled: "I beg your pardon, but perhaps you do not understand me: in calling your family together, I mean, to assemble your servants for evening worship; I shall be happy to lead, if you will allow me.' The farmer bowed, and opening the great door, seeing Johanna, said, 'Wench, go call Michael, William, Jem, and John the carter, into the hall; and, d'ye hear, bring the long bench out of the back passage.' Johanna did as she was ordered, and seeing William sitting on an old hen-coop in the yard, sent him to find the boys. When they came in, Mr. Lascelles was standing with his back to the fire, and Farmer Moss was looking through a little corner window over the moor, where there was a fine flock of sheep feeding, and the moon had risen on the landscape in majestic beauty. The people were standing, and the farmer looked round and seemed quite ashamed of what he was going about. Mr. Lascelles, however, warm with the impression of the Scripture he had just read, said to Michael, 'Young man, fetch me the small table and the Bible:' then he pulled out his Prayer-Book and found the Psalms for the evening service, and then the 11th of St. John, the raising of Lazarus: he said he was particularly led to that chapter,

as the death of a person so long known to his family had sensibly impressed him. The power and love of the divine and human nature were pre-eminently displayed in the actions which this chapter records. He then read it with a clear tone and very grave manner: he closed the volume, and read that beautiful prayer which closes our burial service, and adding the benediction, they rose reverently. Mr. Lascelles conversed cheerfully for a few minutes, but he saw the farmer was uneasy, and he sat a short time silent: Moss went to the door and called Johanna; the girl came—‘Where is Cicely?’ ‘I don’t know, Sir.’ ‘I have a mind to turn that girl out of the house this very night; I’m sorry, Sir, you should be kept waiting for your supper.’ Though Mr. Lascelles seldom took supper, he thought he would avail himself of the present circumstances to make the farmer feel the convenience, as well as the duty of family worship. At last Moss said to the girl, ‘Can’t you boil a chicken?’ ‘I dare say I could, Sir.’ Jem said he could lay the cloth; and in the mean time Michael slipped out, and went to Mrs. Priddel’s, in order to see if Cicely was there, and to get her home. That text was strongly in his mind, ‘Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.’ He saw, to his serious concern, a large party of young men and women, smoking and drinking; peals of laughter rent the air: two young men, who stood lounging at the door, stared at Michael,

who asked them if Cicely Jones was within doors? 'Go look,' said one; and the other vociferated, 'Cicely Jones, here's a gentleman' quiring after you:' they then burst into a roar of laughter. Michael determined to walk from the place, if she did not come out immediately: however, curiosity brought her out, and her surprise was great indeed when she saw Michael. He told her his master was angry, and that he ran to hasten her home: she gave a very reluctant thank'ee, and ran home as fast as she could, leaving Michael far behind her. When she got in, finding poor Johanna rather in a fuss, she forgot her own transgression, and began to question and abuse, with the careless confidence of a faultless person. 'Who told you to put on that saucepan, hussy?' 'My master told me, Cicely, to try to cook a fowl.' 'You cook a fowl, you!' 'I am sure, Cicely, I did not want to do it: master ordered me.' Jem came out: as soon as he saw Cicely he made a low bow: 'I hope you have had a very agreeable visit. Pray, madam, what can I do to serve you? I have laid the cloth: shall I put by your ladyship's bonnet?' Michael, seeing the girl's passion rising, called him, 'Pray, Jem, let her alone; we must keep things still to-night: if she was to go off into one of her passions, it would provoke master, and make that gentleman wonder strangely.' Every thing being arranged, the farmer passed by Cicely's offence. The supper was cleared, and all quiet,

when the following conversation took place between Mr. Lascelles and the farmer :

*Mr. L.* You seem to have a very nice farm here.

*Farmer.* Yes, Sir, 'tis good land, but it's a strange deal of trouble to carry on ; and a lone man like me has out doors and in doors, as I may say, to attend to.

*Mr. L.* You were never married then ?

*Farmer.* No, Sir : my sister lived with me ten years after I began business, and then I had some thoughts of getting a wife to guide the house, and I fixed on Farmer Newton's sister. Poor girl ! she died of the small-pox ; and for a pretty many years I could not put her out of my head ; and now I thinks as 'tis too late for me to rock the cradle.

*Mr. L.* Well, Sir, a single man can do more for the poor.

*Farmer.* That is true, though I can't say as I have ever had a great fancy for the poor ; none can tell, but they as have had to do with them, as farmers have, how impudent they can be.

*Mr. L.* Yes, I can tell, for I have witnessed much of this. But, my good Sir, you must always put yourself in a poor man's place when you judge him. Now think of a person who has no religion, receiving merely sufficient to supply nature's wants, living among persons who have every enjoyment : it is not in fallen nature to be satisfied with such a

difference. If you wish the poor to be grateful, endeavour to get them to read the Bible, and there they will see that this is not their home, that they are only travellers through this world to everlasting rest.

*Farmer.* As to reading the Bible, I don't know as many of them can read.

*Mr. L.* Indeed ! what have you no school in this large village ? I know my mother had a school of girls.

*Farmer.* Yes, Sir, but that is gone by ; and I must own as them that Madam Lascelles had taught turned out very decent ; but now here's a strange racket on a Sunday : and I verily believe my maid has been at a very rackety house, down this village, where the young boys and girls meet on a Sunday evening.

*Mr. L.* This must be noticed, Sir. Do you think they have separated as yet ?

*Farmer.* It's likely not, Sir.

*Mr. L.* 'Tis not more than half-past nine, would you have any objection to walk with me to the place ?

*Farmer.* Not at all, Sir.

Mr. Lascelles took out his pocket-book, cut his pencil, and keeping it in his hand, set out, conversing very mildly with Moss. They soon reached the place. 'I'm in the commission of the peace, Sir,' said he, as they entered the door ; 'pray which is Mrs. Priddel ?' Mrs. Priddel had

taken so much gin, that she was in a very courageous state of mind, and elbowing her way through the nauseous crowd (some sleeping, some swearing), she stood in insolent defiance before the excellent Mr. Lascelles. ‘Your name is Priddel, Madam?’ ‘Yes, Sir, my name is Hannah Priddel at your service.’ ‘May I ask, Madam, is this a public-house?’ ‘I don’t feel much of a mind to answer questions, Sir.’ ‘Very well, Madam: let me see (writing), Farmer, who is that poor wretch on the floor?’ ‘That, Sir, is Farmer Newton’s carter, and that is John Clark, and there are five maid-servants belonging to my neighbours, and there is my William’s brother, and James Newcome.’ ‘And pray, Mr. Moss,’ said Mrs. Priddel, ‘what business have you in my house?’ ‘We’re going, Madam,’ said Mr. L.; ‘you’ll hear from me to-morrow.’—They returned home; and he observed to Moss what a disadvantage it was to a village, the non-residence of the clergy. No moral clergyman of the Establishment could suffer such gross profaneness immediately under his own eye. ‘I know the residence of a squire has its disadvantages, bringing town servants; but even that is not worse than the beastly scene we have just left. In the parish where I at present reside, and where I have some influence, I have not been able to conquer that bad habit of Sunday company. The daughters come to church to show their clothes; the son is frequently smoking with the

company at home, and when he does come to church, seems hardly to know what part of his Prayer-Book to turn to. I would desire to encourage even the appearance of good in them, yet their want of reverence so distracts me, that I have frequently wished them away; I believe they do not know as much of their duty to God as many of our poor children in the Sunday-School, from a foolish notion they imbibed early of being too genteel to learn with the poor children: so that they have little knowledge of any kind; none on religious subjects.'

By this time they reached the farm, and separated for the night. A fine October morning, brilliant, clear, and bracing, rose on the new rector, who, after breakfast, asked the farmer if he might request the guidance of the lad whom he first met, the preceding evening; 'I think you called him Michael.' The farmer seemed to hesitate. Mr. Lascelles said, if he was engaged, it was not material. 'I do not exactly know where he is, Sir; he rises very early, and may be at some distant part of the farm. Cicely, go seek Michael.' He was in the stable, taking an inventory of those things under his care; and, putting up his papers carefully, waited Mr. Lascelles' orders. 'Michael, this gentleman wishes you to show him the village.' 'Yes, Sir.' As they left the house, Mr. L. asked the lad to fetch the keys of the rectory: but this necessity ceased, for cap

in hand came the clerk, to know 'if he could oblige his honour, and if his honour had any commands, and if his reverence would please to see the church, and if his honour would see the house?' bowing between every question, and leaving no space for reply. At length Mr. Lascelles said, 'Give me the keys of the house, and let some one open the church; I should like to look at it.' Mr. L. smiled, and, turning to Michael, said, 'You had a curiosity to see the house?' 'Yes, Sir, I had.' 'And I wished to have a little private conversation with you: I think you know Mr. Walker, of P.' 'I do indeed, Sir: he has been the kindest friend to me. I am one of his poor boys; I owe him all the knowledge I have of the Scriptures.'

*Mr. L.* I have heard him speak of you: I inquired for him of Dr. Collis concerning you, by letter, how your master approved your services, and was highly pleased to be able to send good accounts.

Michael blushed—'I much fear, Sir, you could not be pleased with the manner in which I was spending yesterday evening.'

*Mr. L.* I am far from thinking you were sinfully employed, taking a quiet walk. I know from experience that a walk in a mild evening rather leads me to God than diverts me from him.

*Michael.* But, Sir, I feel ashamed that I should not fear to trifle before God, and yet seek to hide

from an excellent earthly friend the wrong I was conscious of committing.

*Mr. L.* My good young man, this is an infirmity to which we are all prone; forgetting the eye which is ever upon us, and trifling in His presence, whereas we are very anxious to wipe every stain from our character in the sight of a fellow creature.

*Michael.* What a very great comfort it is, Sir, to have such a gentleman as you are coming down to one, as one may say: it gives hope in the midst of discouragement, it comforts the wounded conscience.

*Mr. L.* Keep your conscience tender, my lad; a tender conscience preserves us safe.

By this time the key was in the hall door, and the situation of the hall chairs, the old lamp, and every window closed, gave the impression of death to the scene. Michael immediately proceeded to open the windows and divert the gloom of the excellent Mr. Lascelles. Jem truly said his aunt did keep things aired, but there was much wanted after nine years' absence; and the myrtle was dead which had been trained so carefully over Mrs. Lascelles' dressing-room window; the flowers in her nice garden were totally neglected; and none but a feeling and delicate mind could allow for all our good rector was suffering at this retrospect, this step into past life, and the still yet faithful memorials of the furniture around. The house wanted

much repair, and ought long since to have been examined : the floor of one attic was quite ruined by the damp. ‘ This is sad negligence ; but it falls where it ought, *I* only am to blame : Dr. Collis always said he could not reside ; and his curate was a man of family and fashion, and it could not be expected he should. Well, I must see about gardeners, carpenters, and masons ; things must be put in order. I have a delicate wife and two dear little girls ; and though I cannot help passing through these rooms with a sigh, when I trace again the scenes where so much patience was exercised, and so much goodness practised, yet I must strip the veil of gloom from this quiet resting-place, restore all its cheerfulness, and as much as in me lies bring back to this village the blessings my sainted parents were wont to scatter round them.’ Michael was delighted with the condescending manners of Mr. Lascelles ; and Mr. L. was greatly pleased with the lad’s respectful conduct.—It is worthy the observation of young people, that nothing so much recommends them to their superiors as respect and modesty.

But we must leave this truly excellent divine to arrange his return to his native village, and follow our honest Michael in his farewell to a house where he had lived four years, and his entrance on a new scene, in obedience to his master, and in the hope of being useful to the orphan and the widow.

## CHAPTER III.

MICHAEL KEMP TAKES LEAVE OF FARMER MOSS.—HIS FIRST INTERVIEW WITH HIS NEW MISTRESS.—CHARACTERS OF THE SEVERAL WORKMEN UNDER HIS DIRECTION.—MICHAEL MEETS WITH A DISTRESSING ACCIDENT.—A SCANDALIZER DISAPPOINTED.—DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGE, THE RECTORY, AND THE SCHOOL.—MICHAEL RECEIVES A LETTER FROM HIS SISTER FANNY.—HIS REPLY TO IT.—IMPROVING CHARACTER OF STEPHEN, AND HIS ATTACHMENT TOWARDS MICHAEL KEMP.—INTERESTING CONVERSATION BETWEEN THEM.

It was one part of our Michael's character, when he examined himself, to say, 'What are the duties of my station? I am a servant, and my place is to take the same care of my master's property as I would if it were my own: to put all tools by in their proper places; to clean the harness, and not leave the bridles trailing in the stalls; thoroughly to clean the stable every morning; to see that all places are regularly shut up at night; to speak in time about broken gates; to take special care of fire; to carry my lantern carefully, and to destroy nothing through want of feeling for my master; to take care that gaps in hedges are noticed in time; to watch where the hens lay; to keep the wood-stack square and neat, and warn others to fetch the fagots regularly; if I see waste, always to tell them privately, and repeat it till

they are ashamed : if they are only careless, they will mind ; if dishonest, to tell my master ; to carry out manure in its season, cleanly and completely ; to have no waste of any kind ; to be careful always to put on my slippers when I come in to my meals, that I may occasion no unnecessary dirt ; and when all my business is done, quietly retire to reflect on that state where the weary rest.'

But he was now entering on a new scene : he was to be servant and master. This was a compound which required care. He must not forget that he might at pleasure be deprived of the power with which he was entrusted : he was still a servant to his mistress, though a master to others. He felt the difficulties of his new state, and prayed that he might honourably acquit himself to man, and obediently to God ; and kindly, faithfully, and affectionately to his fellow creatures. In this state of mind was Michael when Wednesday morning came, and he thought it right to seek an opportunity of conversing with his master on his new situation ; and seeing the farmer put on his hat to go out, he ran up to him : ' Sir.' ' Well, lad.' ' To-day is Wednesday, Sir.' ' Aye, lad, I know, and I am sorry, for to-morrow is Thursday, and you must go.' ' Yes, Sir : and if you please, I should be glad of a little conversation with you, about what I am to do when I get there.' ' That's a moral impossibility, boy. Why every thing wants putting to rights : there's plenty, without

order, and every thing seems to be going wrong for want of a master; and that master you must be. I can say nothing to it: you have behaved well here, desperate well, and I dare say as you'll manage very well there. Now, my lad, we must settle something, and I mean to fix your wages at 30*l.* yearly; and my sister will be kind to you, I'm sure: she'll be as pleasant a mistress as you could wish to live with. I know very little of the children, but I believe Jemima is a modest young girl, and I suppose they'll give the boy some learning. 'Tis a sad long way for you, forty miles in one day; but I think if you take my black horse, he'll take you to ——, and there you can hire a hack for the next twenty. William shall go with you, on the rough pony, and he can bring back the black horse. I think my sister will be sure to send a man to meet you.'—As Michael was going to bed, he walked up to his master, with tears in his eyes, and said, 'I thank you, Sir, for all the kindness you have showed me, and I pray to God to bless you.' Here his voice failed, he could not speak; and the farmer looked on him with evident emotion: 'God bless thee, lad. My love to my sister and the children.'

Jem came up to him—Good bye, Michael; I hope I shall see you again.

*Michael.* I hope I shall see you again, Jem, and that you will not forget the advice I have given you; remember, it is all meant for your good.

Jem promised nothing; poor Johanna sobbed aloud; the carter wished Michael all prosperity; and the surly Cicely sniffed her nose, and asked if Mr. Michael would please to breakfast before he went.

*Michael.* What say you, William?

*William.* I am certainly for fencing out the cold; for now November's come, I think the mornings are rather chill.

Here Jem, who loved to plague Cicely, said, 'I think, Mrs. Cicely, your master ordered you to get a nice warm breakfast ready, for the travellers, by five, that they might be off in time; but a lady, who is fitty like, may not perhaps be able to bear such fatigues. Shall I, my lady, shall I light the fire for you?' Cicely, tossing her head, 'I'll tell you what, Mr. Jem: when you go, I'll warrant I'll light a fire, and a bonfire too: you are the impertinentest boy I ever see'd.' And so they parted for the night.

November mornings are seldom brilliant, but this was uncommonly favourable; mild air and gentle breezes seemed more like the infancy of the year than its decline. Cicely was up, and poor Johanna was ready to offer her services. Little did Michael eat, for his heart was heavy. He set off as the church clock struck six. The moon's decline rendered the light less brilliant; but the sun rose at seven, and the light gildings on the top of the Malvern hills, with gradual disclosure

of the scene below, gave him silent pleasure, and his heart rose with his warm feelings in gentle gratitude to the God who had led him through childhood, and continued to guide his youth ; and that beautiful Psalm, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work,' that Psalm occupied Michael's mind, till the turnpike-gate reminded him of poor William, who came on quietly, and spoke not, till the man at the gate said, 'Do you pay for the man, Sir?' Michael stared, and asked, 'What man?' and William rode up and said, 'Michael, Master ordered *I* to pay every thing : ' then, and then only, did Michael remember William ; and drew up his horse beside him as they rode on : 'I beg your pardon, William.' 'Oh, Michael, I ben't a bit offended. I knows as you was down-hearted like, at leaving the old place ; and I'll answer for it we be all mighty sorry to part with you : I'm sure I am for one.' 'Thank you, William, I hope you will ever remember me with regard ; I can say I have ever desired to behave kindly to you.' 'And you *have* behaved kindly.' 'I desire to do right, I am sure ; but we are very imperfect beings, and in whatever way I may have done wrong, I hope you will place it to my account, and not to religion.'

*William.* Indeed, Michael, you have made me like religion a pretty deal better than I used to do. I can't say as ever I had much fancy for 't before,

but now I see as you does more than you says. I took notice as you was talking to Johanna about I this morning : will you tell me what that was ?

*Michael.* You will know, William, when you get back.

Michael had left with Johanna four small Bibles : one for the carter, one for William, one for Johanna, and one for Jem. The one for Johanna she was to offer to Cicely, and if she accepted it, Michael was to send another to Johanna ; but if she despised it, Johanna was to keep it.

When William reached the place where he was to part with Michael, the awkward sorrow he expressed made a deep impression on his heart. ' Well, God bless ye, Michael.' ' And you too,' responded the traveller. ' We shall hear about ye when I come with the hops ; and mayhap you may come too.' ' I cannot tell. My duty to Master. Pray remember me to all my fellow servants.' ' Yes, Michael.' ' Never go to Mrs. Priddel's.' ' I never will.' ' Read when you can.' ' I will, indeed.' And here they parted, and soon lost sight of each other.

The remainder of Michael's way was all new and all lovely—romantic hills, springs gushing from their sides, half hidden by the luxuriant foliage, rocky avenues, and peasants' huts, with now and then a house of prayer civilizing the wilds. At the end of the seventeenth mile he

entered the town of ———, and going to the Blue Boar, he was soon accosted by a very good-looking boy, of about seventeen: ‘Zur, be your name Measter Kemp?’ ‘Yes, my name is Kemp.’ ‘Then, Zur, my mistress ha sent for ’ees; and she prays ye to take somewhat, because ye ha comed a long journey.’

*Michael.* I am very much obliged to your mistress, but I have no need of any refreshment till I reach home: I had a very good dinner, and need no more.

‘Will ye take some ale?’ ‘Oh no, I thank you; I am in want of nothing but a good night’s rest.’ They went on carefully, for the evening was closing in; and they both thought on the death of poor Farmer Finch. As they drew near the spot, Samuel Brown said, ‘Zur, ’twas here as we found poor measter: he hadn’t a bit of sense!’ Michael made no reply; but he lifted up his heart to God, to keep him sober and temperate, and prayed that he might be an example to those under his care, of quiet industry in his station, and, above all, of piety and Christian love. They soon reached the farm: it was under a lofty hill, and in front was a level plain of many acres: the house was large and comfortable. Mrs. Finch was, as her brother said, a nice woman: she was seated in a small room with her son and daughter: there was a look of composed sorrow about the latter; and the mother could only weep when she

inquired after her brother, and when she remembered *why* she stood in need of such a servant. Michael delivered Moss's letter to his sister, who begged he would sit, saying, 'You must be tired, Mr. Kemp.' 'I shall be very glad to go to bed, if you please, ma'am.' She ordered some gruel, took it up to him herself, and told him that the excellent character she had heard of him had impressed her with complete confidence in him; that she should now feel as much at ease as a widow in her circumstances could feel; and leaving the new comer to repose, soon withdrew.

How Michael felt the following morning, may be best conceived by those to whom a very responsible situation is new. It certainly was a time of deep thought, and more unmixed care, than ever Michael had known; and he had recourse to prayer and his Bible: he determined to take Joseph for his model, and to guard the property of his mistress with his most assiduous care; and thus he said to himself, 'I must examine my tools before I begin to work.' 'He asked Mrs. Finch to allow him to see the servants. The shepherd and his boy came first: his name was John Clark; his boy's, Joseph Clark: very pleasant countenances, Michael liked them both. The father said, 'I hope, Sir, we shall give you satisfaction.' Michael felt ashamed of the new importance of his station, but he checked himself when about to speak, because he saw his mistress's success rested on

his consequence; therefore he replied, 'Be faithful to your mistress's interest, and I shall be sure to be satisfied.' The carter, who lodged in the house, had a very stupid appearance—a dark bushy head and a bony figure, small eyes deep sunk, a pair of very red cheeks, thick lips rather underhung, and an impediment in his speech. Mrs. Finch smiled as this man entered: 'Williamson, this is Mr. Kemp.' 'Zu-ur-r Zur, I-I am ready to obey—to obey your orders.' Mrs. Finch said, 'Mr. Kemp, this is a very honest fellow: he has lived here thirteen years: my poor husband had a very good opinion of him.' 'Mis-Mistress, ye be main good,' said the rough carter. Tom, the other carter, was with the team; the boy, Charles, was gone with him, to fetch a load of coal from the next town. Stephen, the fellow, came in—a fine specimen of a British peasant: clear red and white, well grown, a curled head of light hair, clean, and in a frock white and new, with a blue handkerchief round his throat, the nice collar of his shirt turned over; hardly shall one see a more interesting rustic lad. Michael's heart seemed to love him without leave, and the boy looked respectful and bowed. These, with the lad that came to meet Michael, made up the men-servants, and the two maids were very decent country girls. Every thing within doors was in beautiful order, but the want of a master and the confusion of circumstances had prevented what he saw must be his care without.

And now Mrs. Finch desired Williamson to bring Mr. Kemp the horse, and to accompany him over the farm. There was a mill on the stream; but it was out of repair, and the miller seemed not very promising: when Michael got off his horse, the miller turned into the mill-house, as if he would have said, 'Farewell to all my gains.' Though Michael perfectly understood his manner, he passed on as though he had not noticed him; and turning to Williamson, said, 'Who manages here?' 'Mason, Sir.' 'Has he a family?' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Where do they live?' The saucy rogue hearing these questions, came out, and feeling his anger too strong for his prudence, said, 'When you are *master*, Mr. What-d'ye-call-em, it will be time enough to know where I lives. And now I'll tell you a piece of my mind; it would have been more decenter if ye had staid till poor old master was clean decayed like, afore you had come courting Mistress.' Michael's reserve had almost vanished; but he regained his composure, and turning to Williamson, said, 'This mill must be repaired;' and ordered the miller to come up to the house in the evening. After a ride of some hours, observing the state of gates, hedges, and ditches, the underwood that should be cut, and the trees which were to be felled, he returned to the farm.\* It was six o'clock; and before the honest Michael could eat his dinner the impertinent miller

\* It must be understood that Mrs. Finch farmed her own property.

appeared. 'The miller wants you, Ma'am.' 'What do you want, Mason?' The fellow looked half angry, half impertinent, and said the new master ordered him. Mrs. Finch turned to Michael, who rose and said, 'Madam, I advise you to give that man a month's warning: I must have servants who know their places: Williamson will inform you of the reason of my request.' The miller said, in a muttering tone, ' 'Twasn't a new tale, every body knew it, and time would shew.' 'Mason, you have a month before you, *suit* yourself,' said Mrs. Finch. Mrs. Finch's curiosity was much excited, and she immediately called Williamson to know what all this meant. He told her; and, in his stammering way, said, 'Mistress, don't ye mind en, 'tis a ba-ba-bad man, and Maister Kem-Kemp is quite in the right on't.'

The warning giving to the miller produced various sensations. Mrs. Finch admired the penetration of Michael. Williamson approved it, for he was devoted to his mistress, and had no opinion of Mason. John Clark said to his son, 'Mind, boy, for we have got a sharp master.' When Tom (the other carter) returned, and Charles with him, they went into the stable and found Stephen: they had met Mason, who, like many others of his cast, had said more than truth warrants. 'So, Stephen, we're all going to be turned off; and Mistress is to be married next Monday.' Stephen stopped his business, to

ask where he heard that nonsense. ‘Why it came from the house.’ ‘Indeed!’ Mason met me by the lower feeding-ground, and desired I’d mind my manners, for here was the new master would have me in to look at me; and he advised me to put my hand afor me, and look like a Presbyterian, and then mayhap I might keep my place.’ All this nonsense, and much more, passed; but Michael kept on his steady way, and was not diverted from his purpose.

The mill was repaired, and a small cottage added, and Michael daily attended to put things in train. His first proposal to his mistress was to put Williamson into the house, but this honest fellow was so strong and so much attached to his mistress, that she did not like to lose his protection. It was at length determined to get a person as a mere labourer, who should board at the farm, and so have no temptation to dishonesty. Michael suggested to his mistress that the grinding should be paid at the time, and the stupid and dangerous practice of taking toll be no more permitted; that the cottage should be let to some decent family, and the miller sleep there.

While these arrangements were taking place, time slipped by, and the pleasant month of May dressed that lovely country anew. Michael had made progress slowly but surely; every eye watched to oblige him, every step quickened when he asked a favour; and though he spared no one’s faults, he

was so very just to their merits, that they were proud of his praise, because it was always given when merited. There was a farmer in the village who was a great talker, a great drinker, a restless irregular man, desirous of gain, proud of command, yet so unequal in his conduct that he would sit on a gate, kicking his legs, watching the boys at fives, and then get down, finding one of his lads among them, ask what he meant by wasting his time, complain what a sad set he had, and walk home muttering all the way that nobody was plagued as he was with such a set of little idle boys and a pack of worthless men and women : this man, whose name was Greaves, called one evening on Mrs. Finch (who never wished to see him), and said, ‘he was glad to hear she was going on so prosperous; but you are always in luck, and so is your brother always in luck. What do you give that young fellow there for looking after your business?’ Mrs. Finch made no reply. ‘I say, whatever you give, I’ll double, if you’ll part with him.’ ‘Mr. Greaves!’ was all Mrs. Finch could say. She looked on Michael, who felt very uncomfortably ; but as Mrs. Finch seemed to expect him to say something, he rose with respect, and said he was perfectly satisfied with his situation, and had no wish to change : he then went out, leaving Mr. Greaves in astonishment that a person should not avail himself of what he said was an uncommon genteel offer.

The character of Michael gradually unfolded itself; and he became so beloved in the house, and so respected, that he could not help feeling how God had heard his prayer, and given him favour in the eyes of those with whom he dwelt. Now, for the first time, poor Michael began to feel the power of temptation: he thought he had attained; and began to think he stood firm, that nothing could make him forget his God; and just then he forgot to keep his eye on that Saviour on whose arm he had hitherto leant: he was treasuring up in his remembrance how his path had been hitherto marked by the Divine favour, and began to indulge the vain idea that he was a favourite of Heaven: he said, with the Psalmist, ‘I shall never be moved.’ And here every Christian reader will pity him, and every experienced Christian foresee what happened—that, to save him from settling on past evidences, to prevent his becoming independent of that dear Friend whose goodness was his only stay, he must be taught his own weakness. It was in the beginning of hay-harvest, a very dry season, the hay just cut, and some careless person had left a scythe lying in the meadow: Michael not observing it, for it was almost covered with grass, trod on one side and turned his ankle so as to dislocate the joint. He lay under a burning sun without power to rise till the people returned to their work, and to their astonishment found their beloved master lying in the distressed situ-

ation we have described. He was nearly fainting when the people raised him and carried him home. Not to weary the reader with a tedious tale of afflictive remedies, the sprain was most distressing, and the restoratives of a very painful nature, from the necessity of dispersing the extravasated blood. During the long sleepless nights poor Michael passed, he was often led to examine what *needs be* there was for this affliction, and why he felt so sadly oppressed: had he not needed it, he was sure it would not have happened. Having no person to whom he could speak, drove him to earnest prayer: he repeated that part of the Psalms, ‘In my prosperity, I said I shall never be moved; thou, Lord, of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong: but now, alas! I am cast out of the light of thy countenance. But mine eyes are unto thee, O thou worship of Israel! O turn not thou thy face away from me! I am poor and in misery, forsake me not! O Lord, thou hast been my succour; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!’ He remained in prayer, his eyes closed, and was relieved by these petitions, which seemed to suit with his depressed state. Many days his pain of body and the darkness of his mind kept him sadly low; but He who waiteth to be gracious turned again in smiles, and the blessing of God’s presence was endeared by privations: then, as the Psalmist said, ‘We were like those who dream;’ then was his mouth filled with praise.

The return of peace to his mind brought concern for his mistress's temporal interest; and as he now rested on a cane couch in the bedroom, he begged to see Williamson, whose regard for his mistress made him his best instrument. Williamson came up: Michael begged he would sit, as he had much to say. 'Sir, we be all main sorry for your bad a-ac-ci-cident: we would all do what we could.' *Michael*: 'That is exactly what I wished to say to you, Williamson; that your mistress will suffer if you are not watchful.' 'Yes, Sir, I be—I be very quiet, but I watches all one; and I think as ye'll be particular pleased, when ye can walk, to see how well they behaves: and more nor that, they be main sorry for you, Sir, and hope as you'll do well, for they all loved you as much as thof you were their own kin, they think.' It was vain for Michael to disguise, he could not: he had determined never to win their love by doing wrong, he had never hoped to be beloved: it affected him to tears, he could only thank God. Williamson could not understand it: he supposed Mr. Kemp must have been thinking of something else.

When Mr. Powell came to see Michael in the beginning of August, he said, 'Now, Sir, I would have you try your crutches, and gently exercise your foot without suffering it to touch the ground.' This was good news to Michael: he availed himself of the permission, and ere September was over

he could walk or ride a short distance without fatigue. But he felt it most true, that care on his part must follow the surgeon's; for tedious indeed had the confinement been to him, and the protraction of it was more distressing to him than any other sickness, because he was well enough to enjoy reading, conversation, to eat, to drink, and to sleep well; in short, weakness only prevented his using his limb, but patience must be exercised, he must not heed ill-natured speeches, but resign his good name into God's keeping. Nevertheless, James Finch's repetition of a conversation he heard in the parlour between Mr. Greaves and his sister, Jemima Finch, did not increase his willingness to rest one moment longer than necessity required. This gossiping man came in one evening when Mrs. Finch was gone to the rectory with a yearly present of the finest honey, and after a gracious nod, and well, young lady, and how are you now, and how is Madam Finch and the young squire? he drew his chair, and asked for a little warm hollands and water. 'My mother is out, Sir; and I am seldom left alone, so that I rarely think of the keys: but I can get you some ale, Sir, if you please.' 'Well, Miss Jemima, I'll take a little of your ale if it be fresh, for I should be mighty sorry to get the mulligrubs.' 'Sir!' said Jemima wondering, while the sapient Mr. Greaves sat on the hall-table kicking his legs about. 'I'll take some ale, Miss.' The ale was brought. 'And pray,

Miss Jemima, how is Mr. Kemp, your head man?' 'He is much better, Sir, I thank you.' 'Oh! *you* thank me: well, here's both your healths, and I hope you'll be very happy.' 'Sir!' said this very simple-minded girl. 'Pray, Miss, is your mother coming in soon?' 'I really can't tell, Sir: my mother is gone to Mr. Cooper's, Sir; and Mrs. Cooper is very fond of my mother, and she sometimes stops rather late; their servant always comes home with her.' 'Indeed, Miss!' 'Yes, Sir.' 'I am very glad, Miss, Mr. Kemp is so well; pray when do you expect him down stairs?' 'He has been down to-day, Sir; but the doctor says he must have patience, or he'll be bad again.' 'That would be a sad pity, Miss Jemima.' 'Yes, Sir.' 'I suppose your men have had a merry life on't; they don't wish him well as much as *you* do, Miss: I never heard as the mice was fond of the cat.' 'Sir?' said Jemima, whose mind was so unaccustomed to any but simple meanings, that these figures of speech quite confounded her, and she waited with a natural look of inquiry to know his meaning. 'Why, Miss, did you ever see a mouse run after a cat?' 'No, Sir.' 'Well, Miss, I suppose as your men be pretty much like the mice, they have no objection to Mr. Michael being safe in his nest: I think as he must have had a mighty agreeable time on't ever since the middle of June (he has been nursed and coddled), and here is September.' 'He has suffered

a great deal, Sir; Mr. Powell said if the leg had been broken he would not have suffered near so much.' 'Indeed!' 'Yes, indeed; Mr. Powell said so.' 'It has been a pretty little job for Mr. Powell; I suppose he'll have half of Mr. Kemp's wages.' 'I do not know, Sir.' There was a natural good sense about Jemima, though she could not understand the low allusions of Mr. Greaves: yet she never committed any family affairs to the ear of a stranger, and rested silent to all these observations. The undaunted Mr. Greaves said no more to Jemima, but asking for a servant to light him over the ploughed fields; he began with Stephen, the promising boy we have before mentioned, 'So, Stephen, I suppose you've had nice holidays since this famous Mr. Kemp has been in his state bedchamber?'

*Stephen.* Sir!

*Mr. Greaves.* You've had a merry life on't of late, I say.

*Stephen.* No, Sir, I can't say we have; for Mr. Kemp has been so bad, and we have missed him sadly; he knows business, and he's so thoughtful like, 'tis a pleasure to work under him.

*Mr. G.* [Rather vexed to be disappointed.] And you are all such good steady workmen, that you like to be looked after?

*Stephen.* Yes, Sir, we do; at least I do. I'm sure we'll all be main glad when Mr. Kemp can come among us.

This was very provoking to Mr. Greaves, whose whole visit was made with a view to pick up scandal. He reached home in silence, and dismissed the boy without thanking him; and Stephen was full of wonder at Mr. Greaves's questions. Thus it is in this world: true excellence always raises the enmity of bad men; and whoever hopes to obtain the approbation of the world at large will be greatly deceived. The smile of Heaven, and peace in his own bosom, is the sure reward of the good man here, and the consolation of walking uprightly before God will support him in his hours of pain and weakness.

We have hitherto been so much engaged with the inmates of the Valley Farm, that we have given no account of the village, the rectory, the school, &c. The village of ——— was in a beautiful situation; a variety of hill and vale, a small regular street with the church at the end, and two roads branching one on each side of the churchyard. The only really pretty part of the street was the village-green, which was planted in the corners with walnut-trees, five in a clump: these trees were a gift from the late rector to the children of the poor, and the village-green was the gift of the lord of the manor. This was kept very neatly; and on a fine summer's eve it was worth any one's while to walk to see the happy group at play: the old peasants would sit on the benches, and often judge of the merits of the young compe-

titors. Michael had never visited the green, he had only been to the church and home; for in the week he was busy with arrangements, and on Sundays the little leisure he had was spent in reading and meditation. However, when he was sufficiently recovered, Mrs. Finch told him one morning she thought that he had better go to the green, and take James with him. When they came to the first cottage, James said, 'Mr. Kemp, would you like to see our school?' *M.* 'I should, indeed.' So they went in. At the top of the room was a very large rod, and beside it a long paper cap and tassels of curled worsted, and in a corner stood a culprit with his back to the little company. There were about thirty-five children variously engaged: the boys appeared very idle; the little girls had work, and therefore had less temptation to waste time and tear books. Michael ventured to ask, if Mrs. Fairbrother had ever heard of the new plan which kept the whole school employed at once, by means of the children themselves? The old woman rose, and shaking with passion said, 'I'll tell ye what, I'll tell ye what, I've taught school fifty years, fifty years; every farmer in this parish has larned of me and mine, and d'ye think I be going to be taught by a boy?' The children began to laugh, and look at one another, and Michael, thinking it not right to invade the dignity of an instructress, withdrew, not without hearing, 'Well, a good rid-

dance !' and then something about ' Poor Mason !' This went into Michael's heart with pain ; but before he could shut the gate of the little garden, he saw the clergyman with his wife and little girl coming near, and stepped back to re-open the gate. Mr. Cooper said, ' I hope, Mr. Kemp, you have recovered from your accident ?' Michael bowed, and said he had, excepting weakness. He passed to the village-green, and Mr. Cooper to the school. James being seated by Michael, under shade of the trees, could contain no longer : ' What a shocking passion Mrs. Fairbrother was in !' *Michael* : ' Yes, really ; and I am very sorry I spoke to her.' He sat down, and could not help reflecting how painful it was, that turn which way he would, he gave offence. Poor fellow ! the weakness of his body weakened his spirits and destroyed the calm he had felt at first setting out for his walk. Mr. Cooper's manner was very kind, but he determined to draw consolation from a better source ; and pulling out his little Bible, he read that portion of Peter, 1st epistle, 2d chap. ' This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.' He *could* say he had never acted in any thing important without a desire to please God, and he took consolation. He sat reading under the trees while James made himself a whip of a hazel twig and some string. In the mean time Mr. Cooper returned, and passing near Michael he rose to

give him place on the bench. ‘Well, Mr. Kemp,’ said Mr. Cooper, ‘you have greatly offended our village Busby. How could you dare to propose innovation to a person whose experience has carried her through half a century?’ This was pronounced with so grave an air, that but for the smile which accompanied the last sentence, he would have feared he had offended Mr. Cooper as well as Mrs. Fairbrother. Michael replied, that when he set out, he had no other thought but of going to the village-green, and certainly had still less intention of offending Mrs. Fairbrother. Mr. Cooper said, ‘You are a young man, Mr. Kemp; should you live to my age, you will find prejudice too hard for you, and when accompanied by ignorance it is impregnable. That good woman prefers hearing every child read singly, and leaving ten idle while she teaches one, to putting the whole party in motion, and employing every child the whole time of school-hours. I never like to think on the subject, it so vexes and mortifies me; but call I must, because it is my duty. Good morning, I sincerely wish you better.’ Michael’s heart inclined him to detain Mr. Cooper a minute on the subject of Mason, the miller; he looked, but did not speak. Mr. Cooper perceived he wished to say something, and turned back: ‘had you any thing further to say?’

*Michael.* Yes, indeed, I had, Sir. Mason, the miller—I certainly wished Mrs. Finch to part with

him ; he did not appear to me a person likely to suit : I am sure I had no personal dislike to him, having only seen him once ; his want of respect for Mrs. Finch's character led me to judge that he was by no means a proper servant for her.

*Mr. Cooper.* I believe every person in this parish, who has any regard for their own interest, is obliged to you ; we all find the advantage of an honest miller. But Mrs. Fairbrother had two children of the miller's, and her ear was open to his exaggerated complaints. The miller has left the village, and you were the cause of his removal ; these are unpardonable sins.

*Michael.* I am very sorry, Sir, to have an enemy.

*Mr. C.* If you are determined not to have an enemy, you must resolve to have no rule of action, but bend to the evil designs of evil men. Every man will consider you his enemy, whose conduct you do not approve ; and the very sins they themselves are most known to commit, they will be sure to cast on you : thus, for instance, Mr. Greaves will say you never speak a word of truth ; Mr. Mason will charge you with filling your purse at your mistress's expense ; and Mrs. Fairbrother will say you are a selfish malicious young man. Would you wish to enjoy the peace your own excellent principles entitle you to share, busy yourself only in your own circle ; there is a restlessness in wicked people, and they enjoy inflict-

ing the misery they feel, if they can but throw their wicked darts at the peaceable; these are all united at bottom, and 'tis a relief bad spirits always feel, to sink the worthy by their malignity. You have sufficient employment. If you have any hour of leisure, let me see you; I have an intention to establish a two-hours' school for all who can attend it. I mean to give a cottage in the centre of our pretty village-green, and I shall admit none who cannot pay three-halfpence a-week: I shall also give a milk-porridge supper to all who will pay a yearly subscription of six shillings. I shall be very glad to take the advice of any who will oblige me with it. It has struck me, that for a village, where they see and know so little, a moral catechism might be a good thing, besides the Sunday exercise of the Church: but more of this at some future day.

Again Mr. Cooper bowed, and again Michael sought the Valley Farm.

There is such a similarity in the days of a person only employed in the simple duties of life in a country village, that we must of necessity pass over some months, and inform the reader that Michael had quite recovered from his accident; that his health was perfectly established, and his respectability increasing every day, when he received the following letter from his sister:

'Dear Brother,

'I am very happy at home, only I think 'twould be

better for the family if one or two of us could get out; and your master, Mr. Moss, came to a sale of sheep at P., and called on father to tell him as Mrs. Finch liked you so much, so I made bold to ask him if he knew of a place for me, and he said he shouldn't wonder but I might do for his sister, and he asked if I had been out. Now, brother Michael, it would be so happy like, to live with you, do pray tell your mistress that I'll be particular happy to come; and tell her that I have had the whole care of the rectory dairy, and made every kind of cheese, and that the butter has never been disliked but once, and that was when it was long in gathering and long in coming, and I am sure as I fretted enough about that. I have learned a little of every thing at the rectory, because Madam Walker thought to serve me. —Pray try to get me to live where you do, my own Michael.

‘Your dutiful sister,

‘FANNY KEMP.’

Michael shed many tears over this letter, the first he had had since he lived at the Valley. Nothing could be more agreeable to his feelings than to have his own Fanny so near him, but he dared do nothing of this sort without much thought, much prayer, and quiet consideration; but as his master could not have proposed it if he had not, in *some* degree, liked Fanny's appearance, he thought he would give Mrs. Finch the letter without any observation. He did so; and Mrs. Finch said, ‘Perhaps, Mr. Kemp, you may not know that Judith goes at Michaelmas?’

*Michael.* No, Ma'am, I did not.

*Mrs. F.* She is to marry Joseph Clark.

*Michael.* Joseph is a very good servant; but they are both young.

*Mrs. F.* I think so too, Mr. Kemp; but they

seem determined. Is your sister aware that ours is a farm-house? I fear our place may not be good enough, and that there is too much hard work. Is she delicate in her health?

*Michael.* Not at all, Ma'am ; but I hope you will not think I wish to press you to take my sister.

*Mrs. F.* No indeed, Mr. Kemp ; but I should be very sorry to see your sister unhappy when she came.

Michael remained silent ; he saw Mrs. Finch was rather backward, and not knowing her reason, he determined to leave it entirely. Three days passed, and not a word was spoken. Michael longed to write to his precious warm-hearted Fanny, but he thought he would stay till the following day ; however that very evening, Mrs. Finch stopped him as he was going to bed, and said, ' Mr. Kemp, I have consulted Mrs. Cooper, and she advises me by all means to take your sister. And now I'll tell you the true reason why I thought it would not suit : my brother wrote me word Fanny Kemp wanted a place, and advised me by all means to take her. ' She comes (says he) of a good stock ; I never saw a prettier girl, and she has an uncommon genteel way with her.' Now, Mr. Kemp, it was natural for me to think all this was above a farm-house, but Mrs. Cooper says if she will not do here she may do for her ; so if you please to send word if she can wait two months, I shall be happy to take her.' Michael

wrote to his mother the following letter, with a postscript for Fanny.

‘My dear and honoured Mother,

‘It has pleased God to fix me far away from you, but I never forget to think on you when the labour of my day is over, and I pray to God to take care of you all, and to bring us together again. I had a letter from Fanny. Mrs. Finch is willing to take her. You know how much I love her; and I hope she will not be at all giddy, because that would make all our hearts ache. Tell her there is a great deal to do, and pray her to think well on ’t before she comes. My duty to my father: my love to the children.

‘Your own

‘MICHAEL KEMP.

‘PS. Dear Fanny, precious sister, I can hardly believe my own happiness; to see you in two months is such a pleasure! But, Fanny, my dear love, do not be fond of dress; be always clean, but never *fine*, as the silly girls call it; I never think well of a poor girl dressed up. I send half a five-pound note: three to buy father a great-coat, one for my mother, and the other for you: I send it to you for fear my father and mother should thank me; I will have nothing but their blessing.—Give me a line soon, my dear sister, to let me know you have the note safe.’

The note reached in safety, and the fond parents thanked God for his goodness in giving them such a son. The prospect of Fanny’s going out was such a comfort; and in the same house with our Michael too, said the father, as he sat cowering over the blaze of a nice wood-fire. He looked up, smiling, ‘A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.’ His eye moistened as he spoke, and he looked on his family. Joe burst into tears, and every eye was turned on him. He was a slim boy,

of 13 years, and his father had taken some pains to teach him to read, and given him the advantage of a master for writing in the winter; but the boy's sense was not equal to Michael's. He continued crying. His mother said, 'My poor boy, what can make you cry, now we are all so happy?' He said not a word, but continued crying. Fanny went to him—'Darling Joe, tell your own Fan what is the matter?' 'Go to bed, foolish boy,' said his father. The poor boy went out, and Fanny followed. She staid a long time, and when she came back, said, 'Do, Father, do, Mother, go and comfort Joe. He thought when you looked up that you meant *him*, when you said 'a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother:' and then when you said 'go to bed, foolish boy,' he was sure of it; and I cannot persuade him.' 'Poor Joe! Poor Joe!' said both father and mother; and they went to comfort him.

Reader, pardon the digression. We are sure, to all lovers of feeling and nature, the fireside of the worthy Kemps will not be uninteresting.

Stephen, the lad whom we mentioned in the foregoing pages, had recommended himself to Michael by the most uniform good conduct, and the most pleasing attention to his personal convenience. Never would he suffer him to want a clean pair of shoes, a coat brushed, nor any comfort his attendance could bestow. This began in the boy's waiting on Michael, in his room, in the

worst period of his accident ; and as Michael had *chosen* him for his attendant, the boy continued about him, and so endeared himself, that Michael felt for him a fondness he had never before experienced for a stranger. During his long nights of suffering he used to repeat a good deal of Scripture ; and the faithful Stephen, hearing the sound of his voice, would rise upon his elbow—‘ Mr. Kemp, Sir, I sleep so sound ; pray call loud, Sir, if you want me. I ’m sure I ’d be main sorry to sleep when you wanted me. Had not I better be up, Sir ? ’ ‘ No, Stephen : it would make me very uncomfortable. I promise to call you when I want any thing.’ It was now Michael felt the fulfilment of that promise, ‘ he that watereth shall be watered also himself : ’ for the many sleepless nights he had passed with Jem had returned on his mind, in the willing services of Stephen ; and the only thoughts which occupied his mind were, how he could repay his temporal services by spiritual instruction. Stephen always heard with respect, and used regularly to attend his order, where to find the three texts which Michael wished him to read in the day. Michael’s plan was this : doctrine, faith, and practice : ‘ All we, like sheep, have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way.’ ‘ Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.’ ‘ Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.’ These he used to look out in the day, and write the book, chapter, and verse.

Stephen was to read them first to him, and then again to himself, and at night he read them to Michael. The boy's mind was not particularly brilliant ; but truth once received, remained : and this habit was pleasing to him, first, because Michael wished it, and then he felt that he read with more pleasure when he understood how to apply it ; and latterly he went to the Bible in all his difficulties, as he would consult a friend.

The gradual intercourse between Michael and this good boy never declined. Stephen kept the footing he had gained ; and when there was no pretence for nursing him, he always found some question to ask : as, 'Pray, Sir, don't you think our house is improving?—Sir, I think Charles is got steady : I minds when he always went on a Sunday to the public.—To-morrow we are going to try to get a little money for poor Dawes's widow ; she's in a power of trouble, Sir. I remembers the mite as our Saviour said was more than all the rich men's gifts.'" By these, and other little plans, Stephen contrived to get Michael's ear. But though he was very much delighted with the growing worth of Stephen, he found the excellent plan he first formed with a pure intention by degrees lessened his own leisure for prayer ; and this he felt to be the first step to decline in vital piety : it led to the following conversation between Michael and the pleasant improving Stephen :

It was nine o'clock, and Stephen had brought Michael his slippers and took his shoes, and they were walking up the broad old staircase, when Michael turned to go into his room, and Stephen was full of questions on some subjects he wished to bring before his friend. Michael, holding the door in his hand, said, 'Good night, Stephen.'

*Stephen.* May I speak one word, Master Michael?

*Michael.* Certainly.

*Stephen.* Are you angry with me, Sir?

*Michael.* No, indeed: what can make you think so?

*Stephen.* Because, Sir, you used to talk to me of a night; and I love to hear you, it does me so much good.

*Michael.* I am truly glad of this, Stephen: but you will allow I ought to take some care of my own soul; and I have found of late that my prayers are short and sleepy, after you leave me; and this must not be. Look in your Bible to-morrow, Stephen, and tell me what you think of the latter part of the 6th verse of the 1st chapter of Solomon's Song; I feel that it applies to me.

*Stephen.* I go, Sir, because you wish it; but cannot think God *can* be angry with you who are doing every one good.

*Michael.* You are very young, Stephen; and you know but little of me: as to my doing good, I am sure I wish to do it, but I cannot neglect

prayer ; if I do, I shall very soon cease to deserve your's or any other person's good word.

Stephen went away ; but he muttered, all the way he went, 'No, no ! Mr. Kemp is out there, he can't help being good ; it's his nature to be good.'

According to his usual custom, Stephen went to call him at five, and he took his bread and milk at six. He could not resist asking the meaning of that text, 'They made me keeper of the vineyard, but my own vineyard have I not kept.'

*Michael.* In many parts of the Scripture the heart is compared to a vineyard ; and I feel that, in the upright desire to do good to others, neglect of myself has crept in. We have an arch foe, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

Stephen (still warm-hearted, though silent) looked incredulous.

*Michael.* Do you wish me well, Stephen ?

*Stephen.* Oh, Sir ! you know I do.

*Michael.* Then let me hear you speak of the goodness of Him who died for us, and never more of my goodness. Remember what the Apostle Paul says, 'I thank God, I baptized none of you ;' for even in those days converts were apt to look at sinners, and not at the Saviour. Avoid this snare, my good fellow ! And now for business. 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.'

**This conversation had a good effect. The affectionate heart of Stephen understood his master's meaning; and he no more intruded, but left him with a respectful smile the following evening. This little attention, and the continuance of leisure every night, was duly prized and well improved: and often as the door of his bedroom closed, he would exclaim, in the fulness of his heart, 'Praise the Lord, O my soul! and forget not His benefits!'**

## CHAPTER IV.

JEM HAVING BEEN DISMISSED FROM THE SERVICE OF FARMER MOSS, CONNECTS HIMSELF WITH A GANG OF GIPSIES.—HE VISITS MICHAEL KEMP, AND SOLICITS HIM FOR A CHARACTER.—AN INTERESTING NARRATIVE, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM BAD COMPANY.—MICHAEL KEMP VISITS FARMER MOSS.—THE FARMER RELATES TO HIM AN ACCOUNT OF HIS HAVING BEEN ROBBED, AND HIS SUSPICION THAT JEM WAS THE OFFENDER.—ACQUITTAL OF JEM, AND CONVICTION OF ROBERT.—IMPORTANT CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF FARMER MOSS.—MICHAEL, ACCOMPANIED BY THE FARMER, INSPECTS THE VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS IN THE VILLAGE.—THEY RETURN TOGETHER TO THE VALLEY FARM.

ABOUT this time, as Michael was in the fields, one morning about ten o'clock, a message came to him that a person wanted him; and he returned, giving his horse to Williamson, with orders that he would see to some draining he was overlooking: with leisure stride he crossed the home-fields and farm-yard, and saw a tall young man sitting in the porch. The person rose as he drew near, and in a tone of familiarity said, 'How dost do, Michael?' For the first minute he could not tell who it was, but a flush of the countenance recalled him, and 'Oh, Jem, is it you?' followed.

*Jem.* I've made bold to come and ask a favour of you, Michael; that is, as you'd speak to my character.

Michael replied, he was by no means a person proper to give characters, being himself a servant.—He observed Jem coloured very high when he replied he did not want a character for a place, but had got himself into a little trouble, and he hadn't a friend in the world as could do him any good but Michael.

Michael looked, as he felt, astonished. Surely, Jem, Mr. Moss, your master, is the person to apply to; he is so well known, and you have been there so many years.

*Jem.* Yes, so I have; but I have left Master these four months, and I left him in a kind of a pet like; and I can't tell an he might choose to speak for me, because master's got so raging religious since that new Mr. Lascelles came: he's for having prayers every night, and Sundays besides: asleep or awake, we must all down on our knees, and Master reads prayers himself. I'm sure I'm content as he should, if he likes it: and one night he calls me up to un, and asks me 'if I wa'nt asleep?' I said, 'I believed as I was.' He said, 'He thought that wa'nt decent.' And I answered un again, 'That I worked hard all day, and I didn't see nothing indecent in going to sleep when my work was done.' All the people stood round and stared at me, and Cicely burst out laughing; so Master said, 'You, Cicely, may suit yourself when your year is up. And so may you, Mr. Jem; but I once thought that you were better

disposed.' I know what Master meant, though he never said; he meant when you lived at the farm: Master was right enough, that was my best time. Well, after my year was up, which was on the 25th of March, I thought I'd see the world: so I went to my uncle's, and left my box; and I took two pound of my money in my pocket, and three shirts, and three pair of stockings, and off I set. I took a little task work in the next village, and lodged; but that didn't do me any good. One day, as I was walking, not quite settled in my own mind what to do next, I see'd a young girl, about sixteen, coming up: she was an uncommon smart-looking girl, and fixing her eye on me, she said, 'Cross my hand, and I'll tell you.' I pulled out sixpence, and she told me, 'I was born to live free; that I should find friends where I little expected 'em; that I was above labour; that I should rise high if I followed fortune;' and a great deal more as I liked to hear very well.—But you look angry, Michael.

*Michael.* No, Jem, but I almost know your story without hearing it.

*Jem.* Well, I went with them to the woods; and to be sure I was surprised. There was a power of 'em: there was an old man looking very grand and cross; his wife, I suppose, by him; horses and baggage, and an old cart; and under a ragged rug lay three or four asleep; a number of little children; five or six young women smoking;

every one very dark, with a sly uncommon look. The old man looked at Rose, the girl who led me to them, and asked what I came for. She said, 'I was born to live free.' 'I see that,' said the old woman. It grew dusk, I didn't much like it, and I began to wish I was at prayers at my old master's. However, to cut my story short, one of the women told me I was born to marry Rose. I didn't believe that, but I thought I'd get out as well as I could. The old man never seemed to like me; the young ones took to me mightily. I continued there above six weeks. We lived well, and I own I was very much at my ease; there was plenty of fun; good eating and drinking: but I am under a black oath not to betray them. Once, as I stood at the door of the tent, and 'twas really in my mind to make off, I heard a very gruff voice close to my ear, 'Your heels are not feather'd;' all the blood forsook my body, and I think if I had not coughed I should have been lost. Rose looked at me: 'Have you done that net, Jem?' I have, and hope to try it to-night. 'Not to-night!' said the same dull voice: but this did not frighten me. Yes, to-night, Father, said I; and I jumped, and crossed my legs twice. My spirit saved me from suspicion, and I presently after lay down by Samson, a fellow I never liked; but I thought best not to go by Phil, a young fellow just of my own sort. Well, as good luck would have it,—

*Michael.* I hope, a kind Providence.

*Jem.* Aye, yes, a lucky Providence,—I was off, and nobody missed me till I got to my uncle's. He was surprised to see me looking so dirty; and I didn't know what to say, for if I had told him how long I had lived in that place, I really believe he would not have let me in.

*Michael.* So then you told your uncle a lie, James?

*Jem.* Not quite that neither. I said I had been making nets, and that was true; but my uncle looked at me, and with horror said, 'I hope my sister's son has not turned poacher: I never boded good since thee left thy master.' I told my uncle he was mistaken; and that if ever I was at liberty to tell, I would let him know where I had been. He turned away, and I went to get work; there was plenty then, and I got good wages, and paid my uncle well for my board. But last Friday that ever was I came in, and I see'd two men talking to my uncle: I heard him say, 'If I could believe it, I'd give him up, I'd give him up, I say; but justice shall be done, I say justice shall be done.' 'Yes, Sir,' said the man, 'that's what is to be done. This man will swear to him, he lived with him six weeks and more; and he was the man as robbed Farmer Moss, and brought the goods into our company, this man knows him: it's a hard thing to see a good old grandfather like to be hanged for such a profligate young chap.'

'If,' said my uncle, 'he is guilty, I'll not harbour him, but I never knew the boy touch a pin as didn't belong to him; and my sister's son shall not be hanged to save an old gipsy grandfather.' 'Well, Sir, we have the King's warrant.' Now my uncle began to tremble; and I staid not a moment, but crept up the chimney, ran over the roof like a cat, dropped down, crawled along the garden in the next field, lay there in a ditch two hours, and made the best of my way over the road till I got to ——; then, seeing a waggon, I got in, and lay among the goods, determining to get out in the night, and walk on till I could find my way to you. Last night, for the first time, I got some hours' sleep, and bought some decent things to come here. Now this is my story, Michael; and I am as innocent as you are of robbing any one. But, Michael, who do you think that was as offered to swear to me?

*Michael.* I cannot guess.

*Jem.* Do.

*Michael.* I cannot.

*Jem.* 'Twas Robert; that boy as I saved hanging.

*Michael.* Oh! then, you did let Robert out?

*Jem.* Yes, I did; and this is his gratitude.

*Michael.* Could you expect gratitude from such a boy?

*Jem.* Why 'twas a good service as I did him.

*Michael.* Yes, indeed; but, Jem, no friendship

is sound which has sin for its basis. Depend on it, he is in danger of hanging, and he had rather *you* should be hanged than *he*.

*Jem.* I'm not of his mind, I'd rather *he* than *I*. But what can I do?

*Michael.* I'm sure I cannot tell. I will go and speak to my mistress: but first let me put you in safety. He led him up to his own room, carried him refreshment, and seeking for his mistress, he told her the whole story. She was the kindest creature, and continually exclaimed 'poor boy!' 'poor boy, what can we do for him?' 'I knew his honest father and mother; never were honester people than James Brown and his wife.' I wish I could see my brother; or you, Mr. Kemp, if you could go.'

*Michael.* I could and would go, Madam; but had we not better ask advice from Mr. Cooper?

*Mrs. Finch.* Yes, that is true: I will put on my bonnet directly, and go.

She was soon out, and at the rectory. Mrs. Cooper was in her pleasant garden, and welcomed her neighbour very cordially; but poor Mrs. Finch was too much in a flutter to answer her kind inquiries. 'Can I see Mr. Cooper, Madam?'

*Mrs. Cooper.* Yes; but are you in any trouble?

*Mrs. Finch.* Yes, Madam, I am; though not exactly I, but I feel very sorry for the poor young man.

Mrs. Cooper went in, and was followed by Mrs. Finch. Mr. Cooper soon joined them. 'Well, my good Mrs. Finch, pray sit down, and tell me what I can do to serve you.' Mrs. Finch told her story, and Mr. Cooper remained very thoughtful. 'Can you give any opinion of this young man's character?'

*Mrs. F.* He has lived many years with my brother, Sir, and his family have always been very honest respectable people.

*Mr. C.* How has he behaved at your brother's?

*Mrs. F.* He was what you may call a clever boy, Sir; not idle, but not exactly to be trusted.

*Mr. C.* Aye; I know many such, who have very pleasant qualities, but who want steadiness, which can alone give confidence.

*Mrs. F.* Yes, Sir, that is it. I am sure the boy's honest; but I never knew my brother trust him, as he did Mr. Kemp.

*Mr. C.* No, indeed; Mr. Kemp is a person of no common character: his looks are so composed, that a physiognomist would choose him before knowing him; and when known, every favourable impression is confirmed.

*Mrs. F.* Indeed, Sir, I am very sensible of his worth; and I think him, in every respect, the best young man I know. I'm sure he has saved me a hundred pounds, in times he has been here.—But, Sir, what can we do for poor James Brown?

*Mr. C.* What is the charge against him?

*Mrs. F.* Robbing my brother; but of what, I don't think the boy knows, for he came off to Michael directly.

*Mr. C.* Shall I write to your brother?

*Mrs. F.* Sir, you're very good; but hadn't I better send somebody? I could go myself, or I could send Mr. Kemp; for Williamson was always trusty, and he's got so handy-like, since Mr. Kemp lived here.

*Mr. C.* Has he, indeed?

*Mrs. F.* Yes, indeed, Sir, he has: Mr. Kemp has got such a head to plan things, and such a sweet temper.

*Mrs. C.* Mr. Cooper has often remarked him. When he first came, we were told that he was a Methodist, and we were sorry for you, for we have heard enough of those fanatics; but it's clearly proved his method is a very good method.

*Mr. C.* Come, come, my good ladies, keep to the point: you call on me for advice to save a poor boy from hanging, and now where have we got to?

*Mrs. F.* Well, Sir, you think we had better send?

*Mr. C.* I think no advice can be given till we *know* the case.

*Mrs. F.* True, Sir, true. Good morning. Thank you, Sir; thank you, Madam.

The good woman was met half way by Michael, who had his horse's bridle in his hand, and a

small bag packed ; for thus he thought, ' If I must go, I'll be ready ; if not, no harm is done.' So as soon as Mrs. Finch said, ' You are to go, Mr. Michael ;' he put his foot in the stirrup, and bending from his horse, said, ' I have told James Brown what to say to you Madam, and have directed the servants as to his employment ; for he had better be employed : ' and this active useful servant was soon out of sight. ' God bless you, honest faithful young man,' said Mrs. Finch : ' God will bless you ! ' She entered her house, and Williamson met her, looking very arch, and, in his odd rough way, said, ' Could ye have beleft it, Mistress, I be the master ; they be all to obey I ? I knows all as be expected ; and I've got a brisk young chap under me, with a charge to take care on him ; and if any body comes here after him, to keep him close till Master Kemp comes. I han't seen a lad I liked better for some time ; and I thinks he's some kin to Master Kemp, and we be all the better pleased.' Mrs. Finch suffered Williamson to think this still, as she saw it would be for Jem's advantage.

We must now leave Williamson to look after the Valley Farm, and go with Michael to the house of his old master.

Michael travelled speedily, yet carefully. His horse was the same valuable beast which had so often carried poor Farmer Finch : the creature was now in better hands ; and Mrs. Finch, as a

proof of her regard, had given him to Michael. It was the beginning of September ; and though the moon was not at full, it added something to the daylight, and he performed with ease his journey to that inn where he had last seen William. The rough yet honest face returned to his mind ; and he anticipated the pleasure of meeting him on the morrow, with his other old acquaintance.

He looked to the safety and comfort of his faithful animal, and then ordering a slight supper, retired to a comfortable bed. As he closed his eyes, his last words were, ‘ Who am I, and what is my father’s house, that Thou thus crownest me with thy goodness ? ’

He was called at four ; his breakfast was concluded, and his account settled by five ; the road good and well known. As Michael drew near the farm, the first object he saw was Johanna, carrying out some skim milk to the pigs : down she set her pail, and away she ran into the house. She was soon followed by the Farmer, in a fright to know if all were well at the Valley : ‘ All’s well, Sir,’ said Michael the first word. ‘ Thank God,’ said the Farmer, ‘ I was afraid. Well, come in, my good lad, come, it’s heartily welcome, always welcome here ; ’ and he stared out of the window. ‘ Always, always : ’ he could say no more, for tears choked his utterance : and Michael could only take his hand, and reply, ‘ My dear master ! ’

*Farmer M.* Oh, Michael ! you’ll be sorry,

main sorry, to hear it; Jem, as you nursed so kindly—oh, the poor boy, he'll come to be hanged! and I shall be the cause on't, that pinches me worst.

(Michael determined to hear the Farmer's story before he owned any knowledge of the affair.) 'Sir?' said he, in honest concern, and feigned surprize.

*Farmer M.* Yes, indeed, he stole all my shirts early one morning last July, all my striped waistcoats, two of my bed-quilts; not to say any thing of poultry, &c.

*Michael.* Are you sure, Sir, it was Jem?

*Farmer M.* Too sure, too sure.

*Michael.* How did you find him out, Sir?

*Farmer M.* Why, one day, as I was sitting under that fine oak yonder, up comes a little gipsy girl with one of my neck-handkerchiefs round her head: I could swear to the handkerchief, I bought it at —, when I went to see my sister: I looked at the girl, and she said very boldly, 'Cross my hand, Sir, 't isn't too late. You're a handsome man, Sir, and there's a pretty lady in this village as fancies ye. Will I shew ye the first letters of her name, the colour of her hair?' While she talked this nonsense, I said, 'You'd like a bit of bread and cheese: stand here by the gate, I'll bring it you.' I went in; told William to watch and follow her; and taking a good strong party, in case of mischief, and a legal officer to apprehend

her, I returned to my friend, who promised the pretty lady. I gave her a draught of my strongest beer, and the promised bread and cheese; crossed her hand with a shilling, and proved how little she spied into futurity. She gave me riches, and the lady, and the rent-roll of the next manor; and if I had not bidden her good night, I should soon have been in my coach and six. William knew where the camp was pitched, and soon followed the light-footed and light-headed gipsy. His men lay in ambush, and he went forward with a careless air, keeping the legal officer near. He walked up to the tent, where many were stretched at ease, covered with my coverlids; and the old Don was dressed in one of my striped waistcoats. He looked surly enough, and William gave a double whistle: all my men, all farmer Newton's, and a dozen more, surrounded the tent. 'That's your man, Mr. Gifford; I'll swear to my master's striped waistcoat.' Now the watch-word went round, and up started the sturdy clan. 'Off, gentlemen,' said Mr. Gifford; 'beware how you resist the law: it will be worse for ye. If this old gentleman can prove how this waistcoat came into his possession, and if honestly, he will be honourably acquitted; if guilty, let him look to't.'

A gruff fellow, now swung along his ragged figure, wrapped up in one of the coverlids, and then, as if he recollected himself, let it drop,

saying, 'Well, Mr. Limbo, I can hand ye to the man who brought us the gear.' A squalid woman, sitting with her pipe, said, 'That's what ye can, Samson.'

There was a confused look about this man. William said, he liked him the least of the party: however, his offer to produce the man had no effect on the officer, for he only replied, 'I shall lodge the old gentleman safely, and return to you in half an hour.' William ran home to tell me how they had sped; and I was just rejoicing in the breaking up of the camp, when our poor old clerk, Westrip, came, looking the colour of the church-walls, and wiping his eyes—'O master! that I should ever live to see it; to have the King's officers after my own sister's son, after Jem. Oh! Sir, it's as true as daylight, clear and clean. Sir, 'tis he as have robb'd your bucking. Sir, 'tis he. I have put it altogether, Sir; 'tis he. If he had told me where he had a been, when I missed on him so long, I'd a been satisfied: but it's all clear, Sir. Oh! the shame. Well, thank God as my mother's dead! and all my family's dead.'

You may suppose how I was distressed, and how I am distressed. Oh! Michael, I wouldn't hang any body; and to hang Jem, the curly-headed boy as I hae seen holding by his tidy grandmother's apron, times and often—if I'm the death of that boy, I shall never know a bit of peace again.

*Michael.* Sir, I do not believe this boy is guilty.

*Moss.* God bless thee, Michael, for that hope.

*Michael.* No, Sir. I should like to see Samson.

*Moss.* That you may easily do ; for he is in custody on suspicion. The officer thought ill of him ; and when the trial comes on, and witnesses are examined, he'll be brought up to give the evidence he says he *can* give. In the mean time, where Jem can be I cannot think ; and if he is innocent, why he ran away I cannot think.

*Michael.* If you approve, Sir, I should like to go to Mr. Lascelles and consult with him.

*Moss.* Do, Michael ; but first, lad, have a glass of ale.

*Michael.* But not gipsy ale, if you please, Sir.

*Moss.* No, lad, no. Here, take a biscuit and a bit of the Brow Farm cheese ; 'tis a long time since thee'st tasted it.—And so, Michael, you think the poor boy Jem's innocent ? I'd be glad to tell old Westrip of it.

*Michael.* If you please, Sir, after my judgment, we'd best see Mr. Lascelles first.

*Moss.* Aye, true, Michael.

*Michael.* Sir, do you know the exact time you lost the clothes ?

*Moss.* Yes, I do ; and I suppose Westrip can tell when Jem came back to him ; I dare say he can.

Michael went to Mr. Lascelles : he was engaged with company. Michael sighed as he heard it. ‘Couldn’t I speak to him in the evening?’ ‘No,’ was the abrupt reply from a lackey crossing the hall with a loaded tray. ‘What does that young man want?’ said a very good-looking man, who met him. ‘Only, Sir,’ said Michael, ‘to have that slip of paper delivered to Mr. Lascelles, and to be allowed to wait here for his answer.’ He had written these words : ‘Michael Kemp, the poor boy whom Mr. Walker spoke for to Mr. Lascelles, would be glad to speak to him on a matter of life and death.’

Instantly Mr. Lascelles was in the hall. After kind notice of him, he said, ‘Well, young man, are you come about poor Westrip’s nephew?’ ‘Yes, Sir.’ ‘But where is he? do you know?’ ‘Yes, Sir, I do. He is under the same roof with me.’ ‘Is he so? well, then I begin to hope better things; but, young man, I have in the dining-room friends whose advice may be useful to you;’ and he stepped towards the room.

In about five minutes the bell rang. ‘Desire Mr. Kemp to walk in.—Now you may tell your tale to that gentleman.’

He did so, and related all Jem’s story; dwelling particularly on that part where he discovered Samson to be Robert; and then related the manner in which Robert had left his master’s house.

*Mr. Lascelles.* It is very clear to me now;

and his poor uncle has suffered so much, that I should like to send for him.

Michael said, 'If, Sir, I may be permitted to offer my opinion, Jem *ought* to be kept a short time in suspense, because he really is not frightened much, and I want to see him in more fear of bad company!'

'Bravo! bravo! my lad,' said the Counsellor, 'that is sound policy: a month in the house of correction would do that boy good.'

*Michael.* I think, Sir, a month at the Valley Farm would do as well: he is kept close through fear of being caught, and he never liked confinement.

Westrip soon came, looking ghastly pale, and when he saw Michael he shuddered. 'Come, my good Westrip, here's good news for you; take this glass of wine.' 'Good news, Sir? no, Sir, no more good news for me, Sir;' and the poor old man sunk in a fainting fit. He was carefully raised and laid on a couch in the study; his wife sent for, and medical help. They watched him carefully, and returning reason repaid their care; yet his first word was 'No more!' And Mr. Floyd said, no explanation could be of use *then*, and whatever was told him must be carefully told. It was the sight of Michael which had so distressed him; the comparison between that youth and his poor Jem: the one respected even by the company present, and the other a desolate wanderer.

A few hours passed and the matter was gently unfolded, and he desired to see Michael; who went and comforted his aged heart so judiciously, that what was feared was averted: hope revisited his bosom, and he wept, and looked for the time when he should again see his poor wild Jem, and see him without a sigh.

Michael returned to the farm; looked at his old horse Bonny, and then repaired to the kitchen; but the farmer was patiently waiting for him in the inner room, and when he heard his voice, called out, 'Michael, lad, come, come here, I want to know'—'Yes, Sir.' The whole being related to Farmer Moss, he laughed and shook his head, 'You young rogue, Michael, you young rogue, you knew more about it than I did, and stood so innocent; oh, you sly fellow. (And again Farmer Moss laughed.) But why didn't you tell me?'

*Michael.* Sir, I wanted to hear your part of the story, that I might know how to believe Jem.

*Farmer M.* Very good, very good; and it all agrees; the boy's innocent,—I'd lay my life the boy's innocent.

*Michael.* Of the robbery, Sir, I've no doubt.

*Farmer M.* Humph! of the robbery.

*Michael.* But he lived six weeks with these people.

*Farmer M.* Aye, that's bad.

*Michael.* Yes, Sir, it is; no mind of a right cast would willingly have remained so long. I

would have Jem acquitted, but I would make his steady reform sure before I accepted him, or showed him favour; I would let the law take its course, and circumstances unfold naturally: this is Mr. Lascelles's advice.

*Farmer M.* Mr. Lascelles is a nice man. I love him; I owe him a great deal, my boy; (the Farmer rose to shut the door, and lowering his voice) my mind is quite altered, Michael: I think well of all religious people, no matter to me now what they are, poor or rich, I love them if they love God, and believe in Him whom He hath sent.

*Michael.* Oh, my dear master, I do rejoice to hear this.

*Farmer M.* It's very true. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh.' And how ever I came to believe, I cannot say: it must be God's *own* doing, Michael. For I hated religious people; I hated the education of the poor; I hated Sunday-schools; and I shall never forget that Sunday night that I first saw Mr. Lascelles, how ashamed I was of having prayers in my house. Wretched ungrateful creature! I, who had all my heart's desire, plenty and prosperity.

*Michael.* Ah, Master! we are ungrateful creatures by nature.

*Farmer M.* We are, indeed, my boy.—But come, it's time you should go to bed.

Michael went, after a light repast. He said

nothing of prayers, for he thought Mr. Moss might not like to have prayers before him that evening. Religion had made this boy feeling and delicate; his prayer had been answered, he had been blessed and a blessing.

The following morning Michael sought to find his old associate William: he was indeed glad to see Michael, and greeted him most heartily, adding, 'Poor Jem! I counts as ye be main sorry for en: he was a merry lad, but I thinks as there was no harm in him.'

In William's sense of harm Michael agreed; yet he thought, as he wished William well, he would make a distinction.

*Michael.* I do not think Jem would steal; but I know he was always ready with a lie, and I never saw him careful to keep the Sabbath holy: and as our master did not swear, but was decent in his conduct, he could not be profane, and call on God to punish him to all eternity; which prayer, so often repeated, will be heard, to the horror of many a careless soul.

*William.* What prayers, Mr. Kemp?

*Michael.* I mean the common oath. Awful words! uttered in asseveration of things which never happen. If these desires are granted, these shocking prayers heard, who shall say that sufferings thus repeatedly asked for are not justly granted?

*William.* Oh! Mr. Kemp, often and often

have I said those words ; and do you think my swearing prayers will be answered ?

*Michael.* Not if you feel the sin, and humble yourself before the Lord, and have a horror of oaths and curses. I have heard boys not ten swear with rapidity, boys whose only prayers were oaths, and I have marked that such boys always beat the cattle most unmercifully, and cheated their masters in every way : few farmers know the harm their bad conduct does themselves. Our master was strict, but he was just ; he would not lie. I never saw him drunk ; and as for swearing, you know, William, he never swore if he was ever so angry. Well, God has given him the love of his fellow-creatures and to his own soul. Our master is now a Christian indeed and in truth. He seeks only to live so as he may live for ever ; and he would be afraid to ask any thing at God's hand which, if granted, would plunge him in misery without end. Michael returned to this, because he wished William to remember and feel what he had said about cursing and swearing.

Farmer Moss was up, and no nurse looks more fondly after her charge than the farmer did after this good lad.

*Farmer M.* Johanna, where's Michael ?

*Johanna.* I see'd him with William, Sir.

*Farmer M.* Aye ; he'll be looking after ye all. No pride, ye see, Johanna.

*Johanna.* Not a bit, Sir.

*Farmer M.* And yet, ye see, how genteel he looks !

*Johanna.* That he do, Sir ; no lord, like, could be better to see to. And then, Sir, Mr. Michael is so good ; he's all for the heart, Sir : the inside, Sir ; that's what Mr. Michael always says as God looks upon.

*Farmer M.* True, Johanna.

By this time Michael returned to the house, and the farmer began,—‘ O, Michael ; have you heard from Fanny, your nice sister ? I told her I thought she might suit at the Valley Farm.’

*Michael.* Yes, Sir, Mrs. Finch is so kind as to promise to try her ; and in two or three weeks she is to come.

*Farmer M.* I hope they'll be kind to her.

*Michael.* Oh ! Sir, I have no doubt of that ; for Mrs. Finch has the kindest manner.

*Farmer M.* Aye, didn't I tell thee, Michael, what a nice woman my sister was ?

*Michael.* Indeed, Sir, I am under great obligations to you and to her : to you for recommending me, and to my mistress for the kindness and consideration with which she always treats me.

*Farmer M.* As to being obliged to me, Michael, that's nothing ; I sent you there to do them good, and you have. My sister says you are perfect : but you and I have learnt better, thank God for that !

*Michael.* Thank God, indeed, Sir. I never

saw any person more discreet and wise than my mistress ; so equal in her temper, it's a pleasure to live with her : and I always think of Cornelius the centurion when I think on her. I doubt not but her 'alms and her prayers will rise for a memorial before Heaven.' She is quite a blessing to the poor, Sir.

*Farmer M.* Dear creature ! (weeping) she has the natural touch of kindness.

*Michael.* Yes, Sir, she has, indeed ; and I think she is by no means puffed up with any good she does. It is a very pleasing sight to see her with her two children in the evening : Miss Jemima with her work, and James reading the Lessons for the day, and the Psalms.

*Farmer M.* Oddz-so ! Do they, Michael ? I'm glad of that : poor dears ! poor dears ! I hope they'll take to a religious life.

*Michael.* Our clergyman's a very moral man, Sir ; and he's very fond of Mrs. Finch : he says she is an example to all farmers' wives. Such very nice order in her house ; and her servants hired from year to year : and when they have staid three years, she gives them one pound ; and when six, two pounds ; and so on. She gives no better wages than others, but she says long service and faithful service merits reward.

*Farmer M.* Michael, it does my heart good to hear it. What sort of a young person is Jemima ?

*Michael.* A very nice young lady, Sir, and I

believe is pretty much sought after by the rich farmers' sons: but her mother says, unless she has any very great regard for some one, she should wish her to wait; so that at present no person appears preferred.

About noon Mr. Lascelles came. He inquired how long Michael was to stay. He replied, he could wish to return soon, but not till he had seen Samson. 'Pray, Sir,' said he to his master, 'did William see Samson?'

*Farmer M.* He's like enough, lad, for he was there when they took him off in a cart; for he swore he couldn't walk.

*Michael.* And where is he, Sir?

*Farmer M.* In custody till we can tell what to do with him.

*Mr. Lascelles.* That is my business with you this morning, Mr. Moss. I am thinking of having that fellow brought up to my house, and I wish you, Mr. Kemp, to be present; and you, Mr. Moss. Could you swear to the person of Robert, your old servant?

*Farmer M.* I should wonder if I couldn't: his hair is as white as flax; he has a fair skin, a wide mouth, he is broad set, has two marks as he'll carry to his grave; one as he caught in the rat-trap, on his fore-finger, when he was after something in one of the closets; and a bite from one of the horses, on the left arm, for he always used the cattle very badly.

*Mr. L.* Come, come, these are pretty sure marks; we shall have him yet.

Not to weary the reader with tedious descriptions, we will only take him to the servants' hall, at the Rectory, and introduce him to Mr. Lascelles, as magistrate, and the butler, as his clerk, seated at a small desk; where his master, with all his natural dignity and a large portion of assumed severity, ordered in the prisoner. The constable who had him in charge, and an arch, strong fellow, to whom every child in the village was perfectly known, came bringing in their unwilling captive. Moss jumped up and looked aghast:

'Oddz-so! it can't be, it can't be; a black fellow! O dear!' And the poor man looked as though he would say, 'Poor Jem will be hanged yet.'

'Please, my good friend,' said a gentleman who was there, 'a word with you. A bit of sponge, and that scratch wig off, will bring about a change. But do you rest: no man in England is to be prejudged, every one is supposed innocent till he is proved guilty.'

*Farmer M.* True, Sir; thank you, Sir.

The reader must remember that the phantom of Jem's hanging was rarely absent from his mind five minutes together, and the most delightful sensation rose with the hope of his innocence.

Mr. Lascelles began. 'You have offered voluntarily to swear to the person who stole sundry articles of wearing-apparel from the Brow Farm.

What is your name ?' 'Samson Gwynn.' 'Enter that name, Robinson.' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Samson Gwynn—where is the person whom you accuse ?' For the first time, the prisoner looked up, squinting horribly. 'There's one or two here as can answer that better than I can. Bring him here, and I'll swear.'

'There are persons here who will swear to *you* ; but first let the cook bring a sponge and bason of soap-suds, Robinson.' 'Yes, Sir.'

And now the sturdy rogue began to twitch, and look about for escape. Just then Farmer Newton, who had been sent for, entered with William. 'Good morning, Sir. Is this your gipsy beggar, Sir ?'

*Mr. L.* Yes ; and as he has not lately been washed, nor had his hair dressed, we are about to give him this refreshment.

The cleansing began by main force : the wig was thrown out of window, and the eyebrow and hair, though short, shone in primitive silver ; the hands and arms cleansed, the two marks appeared in all their pristine form ; and, by the help of a box of salt of lemons, the face took its natural hue ; and in the fright, the squint was forgotten : and again the abject boy fell prostrate, and howled, 'O Lord ! O Lord !' Not one heart compassionated, not one voice pitied, till Farmer Newton said, 'Aye, Robert, my words be come true. Thee 'lt be hanged at last.' 'God forbid !' ejacu-

lated Moss ; for hanging was the horror of his mind : and that for his goods a life should be cut off, a soul lost—‘Oh ! no, no ; God forbid !’ and he turned his agonized looks to the wall.

*Mr. L.* We must commit the prisoner, Robinson.

The pretended Samson was fully committed to take his trial at the next Quarter Session.

*Mr. Lascelles* now turned to Moss : “ My good friend, quiet your fears, and rest assured this lad will not be hung, but, I suppose, transported. You can have no objection to that ? You shall come in with me and take a glass of wine. He went in ; and being convinced that such a boy as Robert could not come to good in England, began to hope Botany-Bay might mend his manners ; and he rested in that hope.—The end of Michael’s journey being now answered, he told the farmer he must go home next day.

*Farmer M.* And what shall hinder me from going to see my own sister, Michael ? and her daughter and her son ?

*Michael.* Nothing, Sir ; nothing, I hope. I little expected such a pleasure when I set out.

*Farmer M.* But, Michael, man, thee ’st seen nothing at all. Not one walk down the village ; not one call at the new school ; not one peep at the workhouse ; not one look at my new garden ! No, Michael ; you shall not go till Friday. Does my sister expect you ?

*Michael.* No, Sir: she does *not* expect me till Saturday.

*Farmer M.* Well, then, stay you must.

This was hardly fixed before a message came from Mr. Lascelles that if Mr. Kemp was not gone, he should be very glad to speak with him.

When Michael came, he said, 'I hope, Mr. Kemp, you will do all you can to quiet your good master's mind. I should be as sorry as he would that death should be the sentence; but I own I wish the boy transported: such an example is useful in such a parish as this, where the people are in a sad state of neglect, from non-residence, and the lax government of the farmers, who are never awake to misrule till they feel it by destruction in their hedges and their trees, besides more glaring depredations. I do not send for you to speak of my own regulations, but I want you to see how much may be done by a little care and patience; and as I have no doubt you will one day be a farmer, I wish you to see the change which steady, loving, hand-in-hand industry will produce.'

They first walked round the churchyard: every tombstone was in order; the wall was in complete repair; new gates; the walk round, broad, and rolled. But how was Michael surprised to see a neat square building, with two wings, broad gravel court, and seventy children, neatly dressed, at play!

'This is my school on the Enmore plan. I am

delighted with our progress : but we have no time for shewing you this, further than the outside. A little beyond, where there had been a dilapidated barn, was a long room, with four fire-places : it would admit twenty round each fire-place, being on the plan of the Oxford kitchen-grates, very shallow and wide. This room I devote to my old men and women, to my weak women and girls. Here I have a flax-spinning and a weaving manufactory. All my people are paid every Saturday, and no one need come who does not choose it ; but then I allow no one to buy my cheap cloth who does not help in the manufactory. My children come here, and have spun merrily last winter. When it is damp, and they cannot take other exercise, away to my spinning-school !' The street, which was formerly quagmire, was now a nice gravel road. Every cottage in repair, and jessamine and roses in plenty. Just then they came up to Mrs. Priddel's door ; and indeed it was a sad sight to see how vice tramples down its votaries. Poor Mrs. Priddel was this morning selling the scanty remnant of her goods. As they passed, a very tawdry-looking woman brushed, as though she would pass ; but Michael, turning round, saw Cicely Jones, and was about to address her, when, with an indignant toss, she said, 'No, Mr. Kemp, I don't wish to be hanged ; two out of one house is enough. I hopes as you be satisfied.'

Poor Michael was so shocked, that Mr. Lascelles

stepped back, and rising in dignity as he rose in anger, stopped the bold insulting woman, and awed her with a look under which even Cicely quailed.

‘Stop,’ said Mr. Lascelles, ‘where do you live now?’ ‘I, Sir; I?’ ‘Yes; where do you live?’ ‘I lodge here, Sir.’ ‘This woman is going away, you cannot live here; this is *my* house, I have bought it. Persons who have no visible means of support are obliged to give an account; they are sometimes dangerous, and always suspected persons. Persons who are abusive in the streets are amenable to the laws; persons who injure the characters of their neighbours are liable to punishment.’ She was going—‘What do you mean by saying, ‘two in one house is enough?’ What do you mean by saying, ‘you don’t want to be hanged?’’ She attempted to go. At this moment poor old Westrip went by. ‘Westrip,’ said Mr. Lascelles, ‘stop one moment, while this woman hears what you have to say.—What do you think of this young man?’ ‘That he’s been a comfort to my poor old heart, Sir; and saved my poor foolish boy.’ ‘Do you think, if Robert comes to be hanged, Mr. Kemp had any hand in it?’ ‘No, Sir, no. But I believe that woman had, for many’s the pound she has got through Robert’s sly ways, watching while she cheated her master: but he’s forgiven her, and that’s no business of mine.’

Not a word, not a look; but sullen and terri-

fied she stood. 'May God forgive thee!' said Mr. Lascelles. 'Never let me see you in this village unless in service.' She was glad to go: no one stopped her.

A new walk by the river, winding to the church and rectory, pleased Michael beyond expression; and had he been inclined to talk on inferior subjects, he could not, for Mr. Lascelles, willing to cast far from his mind the wretched subjects which had occupied it, looked on the river, rippling to the breeze, and the lovely fertile vale; the old and ruined mansion of the Squire, the Church, ivy-grown, the Brow-farm, and many others in different positions: turning to Michael, he said, 'The lot is fallen to me in a fair ground!' 'Yes, indeed, Sir;

'Where peaceful rivers, soft and slow,  
Amid the verdant landscape flow.'

'How naturally do we turn disgusted from malice, from lies, and insincerity! To the renewed mind these sins are hateful. It has often struck me what a constant suffering our loving, lovely Saviour must have experienced, in living with beings depraved and gone astray—in knowing every thought of every heart. Only think of the love and patience displayed in such a state! Could we ever keep our hearts reflecting on his glorious perfections, it would smooth our rugged path, it would soften our irritable feelings, and

bring us in humble adoration to the Cross, and to faithful reliance on *Him*, who crowned a life of forbearance with a death of agony, for us men, and for our salvation. Let us pass this, and view the rising Lord of life and glory meekly joining his mourning and scattered disciples : let us look on that wonderful display of power in the resurrection ; let us consider the ascending God ! O my Christian lad ! let us ever bear in mind that He will so come in like manner as we have seen Him go. Why is it that human science tends to harden us ? pride is at the root. Wherefore is it that those most frequent in attendance on sickness and death so little feel its portentous consequences ? the pride of the healing art, and the hurried succession from one sick-bed to another, shut out reflection, and too frequently it is displeasing to the medical attendants to hear the sound of eternity in the sick-room ; whereas, to the prepared soul, it is the loveliest landscape, the most perfect view, on which the eye ever rested. Glory ! O inconceivable thought ! And to live in sweet anticipation, with peace on the earthly border, fellow travellers, in His own house, and many more occasionally joining, and taking sweet counsel—O Mr. Kemp ! this is bliss to which the world is a stranger. Surely, surely we have a goodly heritage !

Michael was about to reply, when two sweet girls, healthful and happy, caught each a hand of

their delighted father. The servant said, 'If you please, ladies, shall I take your baskets and the book?' 'O, yes, Phœbe.'

*Mr. Lascelles.* What have you found? any new flower?

*Ladies.* O yes, Papa; yes.

Michael seeing the young ladies engaged their father, advanced respectfully, and said, 'I humbly thank you, Sir, for all your condescending goodness to me.'

Mr. Lascelles looked on him benevolently: 'God bless you, young man! keep your conscience tender; and may the angel of His presence be with thee!'

We must spare the reader the languor of a journey over an old road. Farmer Moss and his companion travelled pleasantly; one subject warmed their hearts, and the Farmer saw every thing with new delight: and oh! how differently did he view the place from which Finch started the night he was killed! Here, thought he, the poor creature took his last farewell of all earthly! And where, where is the soul? He cried like a child. Michael came up with him, and looked concerned. 'I'll tell thee, lad; I'll tell thee, Michael, by-and-by.' 'My dear master, are you well?' 'Yes, Michael. When we are on forwards I'll tell thee.' 'Do, Sir, pray: if I can do any thing'— 'No, thee canst not; no:' and here the poor creature wept anew.

Michael hesitated, and was riding in the farmer's tract, admiring the singular loveliness of the setting sun on the changing foliage, when suddenly the farmer called, 'Michael, lad, I want to go in cheerful; and so I shan't talk now: but sometime afore I go home I'd be glad to talk about *them as is gone*.'

They drew near the Valley Farm: some of the workmen passing, ran back to tell the family; and the inmates came running out, with gladness in their looks, to welcome the unexpected visitor. How cheerfully the evening passed in the parlour, may well be imagined. Michael was anxious to see Jem, and to ease his mind as to the hanging; but, for the other part, he meant to make him feel how near his poor uncle was to become the victim of palsy, from the horror with which he was seized while the search was making after his nephew, and his continued agitation while he feared for his life.

Jem heard it with much more concern than he had expected; and though he thought it right to keep him awake to past imprudence, yet he felt so gratified that the boy *was* affected with his uncle's indisposition, that he was not disposed to press the matter *too* closely at that time. But when Jem, on the following morning, said, 'I am glad it is over,' Michael perceived how difficult it was to make a lasting impression on a light mind: and he replied, with his usual energy, '*James*, the

*trial is not over ; there were many in that company who bore you ill-will."* Jem felt the rebuke, and was silent.

The farmer, in the course of the morning, was planning and consulting with his sister what to do with Jem. It was settled, if Stephen and his friends would consent to it, that Stephen should go to the Brow, and Jem remain at the Valley. And in order to make the change agreeable to Stephen, he was to have his wages raised. Stephen was called up from his daily employment, and bid to go into the parlour. When he entered, the door was closed. He had been so much in the habit lately of being busy with his own mind, and had seen so much reason to doubt himself, that his first idea was, what is the matter? what have I done? 'Stephen,' said his mistress, 'you have been a good lad : I should be glad to be of use to you.' Stephen bowed. 'My brother is willing to take you : he will advance your wages.' The boy looked thunderstruck. 'Are you angry with me, Mistress?' 'No, indeed, Stephen! do you think your father and mother will have any objection?' 'O, Mistress, I could not go!' 'Poor boy!' said Moss, 'he's got a feeling heart. I sees it; he don't like to leave his old mistress.' The boy was honest; he did not choose it should rest there. 'No, Sir; Mistress has been very good to me: and beside, there's Mr. Kemp, Sir; I've been so used to work under him.' 'Oh! Mr. Kemp;

that 's it ?' said the farmer ; ' well, boy, what has he done for thee ?' for the farmer longed to hear some of Michael's praises. ' Sir,' said he, ' he has shown me the right way to do every thing. I am sure I never knew the use of my Bible till he come here ; and *now* I finds a bit for every thing ; and I 's never without company in my own thoughts. Oh ! I don't think I could leave Mr. Kemp, Mistress, of my own will ; and I pray you not to name it to father (afeard he should be consentin, and desire me to go) ; and then, ye know, I couldn't go clear against duty.'

All this while Farmer Moss listened with evident satisfaction. ' The boy is quite in the right, sister : I should be just like him if I were in his place. I 'm sure it went to my heart to part with Michael ; and I had not such good reasons as this boy, though I 've got them now, boy [nodding] : and if you are one of the little children Jesus Christ speaks of, here, take my hand, for we are both of one heart and one mind.' Mrs. Finch stared : she thought her brother very much altered ; greatly improved in some respects ; but that he should shake hands with one of her servants seemed out of place, and she was sorry for it.

As soon as the boy was out of the room (and glad enough he was to get out), ' What an uncommon-looking lad that is ! why, sister, you are main lucky, I can tell ye :' and here the farmer's heart smote him. ' I should say, God has been

very good to you.—Ah!’ said he, muttering to himself, ‘bad habits, bad habits; old sinners! Luck, indeed! luck!’

The tear was in Mrs. Finch’s eye, for she began to think there was something wrong about her brother’s head; having heard him mutter all this in an under tone. ‘My dear brother, shall we take a walk?’ ‘Yes, my dear, with all my heart. But, as I was saying, I don’t think any farmer round the country can have two such lads as Michael and Stephen.’

Mrs. Finch was relieved; and she said, ‘Well now, my dear, let us walk. But, brother, what did you mean about old sinners, and luck?’ ‘O my dear, I meant that there is nothing comes by luck; it is all ordered by God. God sent Michael to you, my dear; and He has changed the heart of Stephen: and God has changed my poor old heart. You know, sister, I always went to the church; that is, my body went; but my soul was in the field, and in the stable.’

Here poor Mrs. Finch looked again. She sighed inwardly, but said no more. Farmer Moss felt the sigh: he understood it. ‘Sister,’ said he, ‘there is a great change in me; a great change for the better, Sister. God has granted me, hardened old fellow as I was, a new nature: I hope He will grant thee a new nature, Sister. Read the third chapter of St. John, my dear: the Gospel,

my dear. Oh ! that's a fine chapter ; that's what Mr. Lascelles calls the grammar.'

Mrs. Finch calmly smiled ; and in her own mind she said, 'My poor dear brother ! he is not mad, but he has been among the enthusiasts.'—  
 'Well now, sister, it seems you have a man more than you know what to do with ; and we are no nearer about providing for Jem. I think I should like to have a little conversation with Michael, and hear how the boy seems to take this business.' So the farmer put on his hat, and went to search for Michael. He had hardly got out of the yard before he met Williamson. 'Where is your master ?' 'He'll be in, Zur, in a minute,' stammered Williamson. It just then struck Moss that Williamson would be a good person to question as to Jem's behaviour during Michael's absence : so he began. 'What do you think of that Jem, chap, as came from the Brow ?' 'He's not, as I may say, Zur, a Measter Kemp. He's a very fine boy, Zur.' 'How did he behave while your master was away ?' 'Why, he was like a spirit—neither eat, drank, nor slept : if he saw a strange man, he was off like a bullet from a gun.' 'Ah ! ah !' said the farmer, 'that was right, sure enough.'

Williamson stared, for he could see nothing right in what he had been describing ; for he knew nothing of Jem's story.

By this time Michael joined them. The tall

farmer laid his hand on Michael's shoulder. 'Come, lad, I want to talk with thee!' and Williamson, with a humble bow, and his natural satisfied grin, took his way to the house.

*Farmer M.* Well, Michael, what are we to do with this Jem?

*Michael.* I'm sure, Sir, I don't know; that lies heavy on my mind. Jem's almost too much for me. There is but one way, Sir, that I can think on; and that is, if good Mr. Lascelles would take him into his service.

*Farmer M.* That is a very good thought of yours, Michael. Well, I'll take him home on that speculation.—I have not had one moment's talk with thee, Michael. I'd like to see the Village-green, and those fine walnut-trees in which I always delighted.

So they walked down, and it being mid-day, they had the green to themselves. There, under the verdant canopy, seated quietly, Moss began:

*Farmer M.* I can't forget poor brother-law, when I come here. He was a good-natured man: I'd fain hope he's gone to Heaven; but 'twas so sudden.

*Michael.* It was, indeed, Sir [said he, *very gravely*].

*Farmer M.* What do you think of it, Michael? *What do you think of it?*

*Michael.* I think it was very shocking, Sir.

I think unprepared death is the most shocking thing.

*Farmer M.* And so you think there is no hope that he is happy? Poor soul! Poor soul!

*Michael.* O dear, Sir! I should not dare to think with any thing like certainty about it. It is dangerous to the living to think *lightly* of a sudden departure in the midst of sin; and it would be presumption to doubt God's mercy. My dear Master, we must leave it.

*Farmer M.* I believe we must, Michael; for I don't see as we can settle it. I can't help thinking, sometimes, as it would have been a good thing for him to have had somebody to speak to him. I think on him sleeping and waking, now I know the value of my own soul. And my poor sister, Michael, I don't think as she knows much about the matter.

*Michael.* I think, Sir, that my mistress is faithful to the light she has, and I firmly believe as God will grant her more.

*Farmer M.* That's a blessed thought to me, Michael; that's been a comfort to me, lad: and here the feeling Moss wept again.

*Michael.* My dear master, I'm a weak creature. I learned that lesson more perfectly in my confinement. When the Lord laid his hand upon me, I felt that my heart was even 'as melting wax.' 'Tis all delightful where the sun shines,

Master ; but when God withdraws his smile, O the darkness of the human soul ! He has been very gracious to me. What friends I have had ! what prosperity, Sir !

Moss had it in his mind to say, 'Aye, boy, you've deserved it : ' but he stopped with this reflection, 'what have we that we have not received ?'

*Farmer M.* Then you think, Michael, as my poor dear sister is in the way to become a Christian ?

*Michael.* Indeed, Sir, I do.

*Farmer M.* It's good news, Michael ; the best news I could hear.—We must leave them as is gone, Michael.

*Michael.* Indeed, Sir, we must.

They returned to the house ; and as they went, they saw Mrs. Fairbrother at her cottage door, and the little tribe just let loose from confinement.

*Farmer M.* O Michael, you haven't got a National School here. The old dame is at the head of it still.

Michael made no reply, for he had not forgotten Mrs. Fairbrother's abuse.

*Farmer M.* If I had seen Mr. Cooper, I'd been speaking to him about it, I think.

Still Michael was silent.

*Farmer M.* Why you don't seem to like these plans, Michael.

*Michael.* Indeed, Master, I do. But I have no power in the place. You forget I am only a

servant. And he then mentioned the ill-will he had incurred by only hinting at the new plan.

*Farmer M.* O Michael, don't you know we must pass through evil and good report?

Michael looked at him benevolently, and thought 'how my master is changed!' When God becomes the teacher, who teacheth like Him?

By this time they reached the Valley. As they went into the house, Moss said, in a half whisper, to Michael, 'You look up Jem; and be preparing him for his journey, Michael.'

When Michael and Jem were alone together, Michael informed him of Moss's plan. Jem looked rather shy of it; said he thought he could have done very well at the Valley, and that he thought Mrs. Finch liked him; and at last betrayed a secret which had been lurking in his mind—that he thought Miss *Jemima* liked him!

Michael looked at him, in unfeigned astonishment at his vanity and his presumption; and, in order to crush it instantly, he gave him the solid observation of Jemima upon his character. 'I heard Mrs. Finch observe to her daughter, that you were an active clever boy; and Miss Finch, with the good sense and discernment natural to her, said, 'Mother, that boy is quick. He thinks himself handsome. He has very little principle: he is not to be confided in; and requires very firm authority to keep him in his place.' I think she was right, Jem; don't you?'

Jem made no reply, put pulled his shirt-sleeve over his knuckles.

*Jem.* And so, Michael, you wish me gone?

*Michael.* Indeed I do. I think you want a kind master, a man of years and authority.

*Jem.* I sha'n't like to be *under* very much.

*Michael.* You think you are fit to govern yourself, then?

*Jem.* No: I don't say that, neither. I know I be very foolish, and I know I am very much obliged to you for all the trouble you 've taken with me; and I am very sorry as I told you what I had in my mind about Miss Jemima.

*Michael.* I'm not sorry for that; I promise you never to mention it. Behave modestly; keep your place. Go home quietly with your master, and follow all the advice he gives you. Depend upon it I am too much your friend ever to betray you.

This kind speech of Michael's sunk into James's heart with more impression, and bound him more closely. He looked up with an expression Michael had never seen in him before. He had been betrayed by his natural character, vanity and lightness. He thought, and he thought truly, that he was a handsome boy; and he fancied Miss Jemima admired him, because he was on the look-out for admiration; so that every civil speech her humanity had pointed he believed to be an evidence of

her partiality for him. But what Michael had told him had completely convinced him, and this folly of Jem's was at an end ; and when Michael promised that it never should be mentioned, he felt as easy as though he had never betrayed himself.

*Michael.* And now, my dear James, I have nursed you in sickness ; often have I prayed for you and with you. I have exerted myself to bring you out of this trouble ; I hope you will be safe. Let me give you this parting advice : If all the advantages of marrying a person much above your station could be yours, depend upon it the event would *not* bring happiness. A man would feel too much obliged to a wife (if not ungrateful), who had raised him from a state of servitude to be master over property he had no natural right to expect. No, my dear Jem : let me advise you ; go on steadily for some years ; your good master has a kind plan for you. Be sure you behave yourself prudently. Above all things, my dear fellow-servant, do pray to God to keep you in His way. Read your Bible ; go to church regularly ; listen to the advice of Mr. Lascelles, and may God be with you, my dear James.

For the first time in his life Jem had nothing to say ; but he looked very grave, and Michael liked his manner : and it will be pleasing to the reader to know that this spring of hope respecting

James, the first which had ever risen in the bosom of Michael, this spring was never cut off. At last the boy gained power to speak.

*Jem.* I do love you, Michael; you have been more than a brother to me. I will try to do as you desire me.

Michael promised him a note to Mr. Lascelles; and James departed with Farmer Moss, in lower, yet happier spirits than he had risen with in the morning.

‘Fare thee well, my good Michael! and do not forget thy poor master;’ were the last words Moss spoke, as Michael saw him out of the yard; and Jem said, in a tone of the highest feeling, ‘I owe you every thing, Michael; I owe you my life.’

## CHAPTER V.

A DOMESTIC SCENE, THE HAPPY COTTAGERS.—FANNY KEMP TAKES LEAVE OF HER FRIENDS, AND, ACCOMPANIED BY HER FATHER, SETS OUT FOR THE VALLEY FARM.—KINDNESS OF MRS. WALKER IN PROVIDING FOR THEIR COMFORT ON THE JOURNEY.—HER PRESENTS TO FANNY.—INTERVIEW BETWEEN MICHAEL AND HIS SISTER.—FANNY ENTERS ON THE DISCHARGE OF HER DUTIES.—HER INDUSTRY MEETS WITH THE APPROBATION OF HER MISTRESS.—JAMES BROWN GOES TO LIVE AT THE RECTORY.—MR. LASCELLES ENDEAVOURS TO PROMOTE HIS SPIRITUAL WELFARE.—DECLINING HEALTH OF FARMER MOSS.—HE IS VISITED BY HIS FAMILY AND BY MICHAEL KEMP.—SERIOUS ILLNESS OF FANNY KEMP.—STEPHEN MEREDITH EVINCES AN ATTACHMENT TOWARDS FANNY.—HER RECOVERY.

At the foot of the Pen-y-Vale Hills stood the cottage of Meredith. It had been two tenements, and for want of repair was sinking fast into decay. The one in which Meredith lived was best defended from wind and rain; but it had a corner-chimney, ill-built, and suffocating with smoke when the blast blew one way. This was an inconvenience borne heavily by the wife, who brought up seven fine babes by this one fire-side, and whose pride lay in their bright hair and clean-washed clothes. William Meredith was head gardener to a gentleman in a neighbouring parish, and the cottages in which he resided were on a small spot of ground belonging to his master, who had frequently

offered him a better cottage, near the Park ; but he was greatly attached to his old residence, and he constantly preferred walking a mile to his work to any other spot. It was situated on about half an acre of ground, which was cultivated with the most sedulous care ; and though the cottage might be deemed a ruin, yet care, and a hod of mortar now and then, had made the ruin so very decent, that the ivy and roses bloomed in security on the well-cemented walls.

Ellen Meredith was the best of wives. She had devoted herself, with all the powers of her soul, to William and the children. Never had children a mother who doted on them more fondly, and never had mother a more lovely set of children. Her husband and herself were remarkable for their strength and activity, and in the eyes of each other were the flower of the parish where they lived. Ellen spun the flax her husband raised, in small quantities, it is true ; but what will not patient industry effect ? Every child spun lambs'-wool, and knit its own stockings : and never did William Meredith's babes leave home ragged or dirty. Ellen (for I must tell true) was proud of her husband, and proud of her children. Nature had made them lovely, and it was her pride to adorn them. 'As white as Ellen Meredith's home-spun,' and 'as clean as William Meredith's piece,' were common by-words in this parish. Each of this decent pair had a hobby ;

and each laughed at the other's folly, as they called it. William collected every blue-looking stone he could find, and hoarded them in a corner of the ruined dwelling; and Ellen had discovered a blue dye with which she coloured all her boy's handkerchiefs: and when Ellen laughed at William's blue stones, William laughed at Ellen's blue dye. Ellen spun her own thread and her own worsted. She set her children to various employments, according to their ages.

In the evening, William heard his children read; and as he sat, he generally threw a stone in the fire, and then Ellen would laugh; and when she laughed, he would untie his blue handkerchief, and laugh in his turn. Years rolled round; and every now and then a half-day was begged for labour at home, and some patch on the low dwelling, till not an aperture was left. One day, at the close of this patient labour, Ellen said, 'Now, William, I hope you have finished my laundry outside?' 'I have,' said William, '*outside.*' 'Why what may you be going to do?' 'Not to dye it blue, Ellen.' (Ellen, laughing) 'No, no; I dare say. But you'll be paving it with blue stones, I'm thinking?' 'Now come here, Ellen, and see what I'll do with my blue stones.' He took an old plate, and pouring some water over it, Ellen was astonished to see the whole fall to powder.

'Now, father,' said the oldest boy, 'ye've told

mother your secret.' 'Not all, Ned.' 'No, not all,' said the rosy confident.

In another corner of Ellen's laundry lay some small stones, as nearly of a size as the children could collect them. 'And pray,' said Ellen, 'what are these for, here?'

The father and his boy laughed, and would not speak a word.

Fifteen years of life had passed ere the patient husband had accomplished his purpose. The stones at which Ellen had so often laughed, were laid with the nicest care; and the interstices were filled with a composition of lime and sand: and now very gravely did William beg Ellen would confine herself to the sitting-room, and promise not even to look in at the window as she passed. William, the next boy, was also in his father's confidence. He had kept the secret where the larch was gone, which lay seasoning two years; and all the questions about the beautiful auriculas were evaded: the quantity of white Provence roses, too, which had been reared with such care, where were they gone? and when?

'It's a thievish country, mother,' said William. 'Aye, Willy,' said his mother: 'I know you and your father would never have been so quiet if you did not know pretty well where they were.' Willy said, 'Oh! mother, you always think you know our business; and I am sure you cannot say father or I ever does any thing sly, but what is for yours

and the children's advantage.' Here young Ellen patted Willy's cheek. 'The children, hey, Willy!' Willy laughed and ran away.

The week came which was to terminate Meredith's labour; and at three o'clock one morning young Ellen ran into her father's room, 'There's surely some one getting in!' 'Nonsense, child,' said Meredith. 'Go to bed; make yourself easy, my Ellen,' said her mother. 'I have no doubt but your father knows who's there, or he would not lie here like a coward, and hear that hammering.'

Meredith feigned not to hear it; and did not rise till all was quiet. When they rose at five, and had made the fire and finished the frugal meal, 'Now, my dear Ellen, come to the parlour, and see how you like it.' This worthy wife was indeed delighted; and the noise she had heard was found to proceed from the glazier, who had been putting in a very nice casement. But nothing gave Ellen so much pleasure as the fire-place, with its corners for the kettle; it was all plastered and white-washed, and the ceiling complete. 'But, Mother, only look at the floor!' 'It's all beautiful, my dear; it's like your nice father, and his nice boys. I'm delighted with it all.' 'Well, we will have something for dinner.' 'Mother,' said Rose, 'do you see the shelves, and the wooden closet, and the window-seat?' 'Aye,' said the happy Willy; 'this is the larch, mother; and the grate is the

auriculas ; and the windows and the fire-irons are the Provence roses.' 'Dear good Willy,' said Rose, who doted on him, 'how he must have worked !' 'That he has, indeed,' said his father : 'and he shall have a new pair of shoes the first money I can spare.' 'Dear Willy !' said the mother, as she wound his curling auburn tresses round her finger, and looked on his lovely face.

Just then Frank ran up. 'Where's the door ?' Ellen took up her pet boy. 'Love thee, babe, thee'st more sense than all of us. Where is the door, Willy ?' 'Mother, it's stopped up ; and father took in a bit to make that fine window. He said it would be more lightsome, and that a window and door too would make it cold.'

'Now, my honest man, I have only one care ; I think you have laboured for others.'

'No, my good wife : my master has given us the piece out and out ; signed and sealed it with his own hand. And this evening, wife, we must send for our Stephen from the Valley, and let the children be dressed ; for the Lord and Lady come to-night to see the piece and the cabin.'

Ellen's eyes glistened ; and young Ellen was sent to the Valley-farm, to pray mistress to spare Stephen to come to the *Level-bit*, which was the name given to the half-acre granted to Meredith.

Moss had but just left the Valley, when young Ellen, modestly courtesying, entered the porch.

The inmates were passing, each to his own engagements, when Ellen begged to know if she might speak to Stephen Meredith?

One of the maids said, 'I'm sure I can't tell you where he is. Mr. Kemp; Sir, do you know where Stephen is? The wench, his sister, wants him.'

Michael turned round to speak to the girl; whose modest appearance struck him very much. The natural grace of Ellen's figure *appeared*, though her dress was of the plainest and the coarsest materials. But the scrupulous cleanliness in which Ellen had brought up all her children had given them that natural attraction which every pure mind feels.

Michael felt a sort of surprise at the girl's appearance, and answered her inquiry for Stephen by a promise to send him down.

Ellen dropped her courtesy, and went home.

Michaelmas was now come, and Michael's own Fanny had put all her wardrobe into a new deal box, and had got a present from her mother, and a present from her father, and all was ready; and she tripped to the Rectory to take her leave of them, and to thank them for all their goodness, and to pray to know if they had any word for their Michael.

Fanny was much beloved at the Rectory; and every female hand had been employed in making

something that might be useful to her ; and it was all put up neatly, and directed for ‘ Fanny Kemp, waiting her arrival.’

There is no doubt but Fanny was very grateful, and pleased ; but this last kindness only made up the sum of their goodness, and every instance added, swelled the tide of Fanny’s sorrow for the parting hour ; and strongly and painfully did she feel the separation.

‘ How do you go, my good girl ?’ said Mrs. Walker. ‘ My father takes me, Madam ; we are to have the carrier’s double horse as far as H—— ; then we are to walk ten miles, and to get on as we can.’

Mr. Walker addressed Fanny, with that smile of benevolence which ever accompanied his advice. ‘ Be always, *clean*, Fanny ; never fine. Dress is the *snare* of young women. Never do any thing without consulting your *very worthy brother*. Do not expect to be *perfectly happy* ; in every new place there are new trials. Read your Bible, my dear child.’

Fanny stood twisting her pocket-handkerchief from one hand to the other, and courtesied at the end of every sentence ; the tears running down plentifully : and good morning, Sir ; and thank you, Madam ; and *good bye*, Miss ; *good bye*, Master Edmund ; and she took up her new blue box, and returned to her father’s cottage.

He was looking out and getting impatient.

*'Fanny, child, it's nine o'clock and past ! We've twenty miles to ride double horse ; and the beast must rest. I wish thee 'st taken leave last night. We shall be dark in at H——.'*

Fanny said not a word. The children clustered round her : Joseph and Jane, pet Sarah, and Samuel ; and the dear mother, who could only say, *'Fanny, my comfort, be sure be guided by our Michael.'* Not a word could Fanny speak. She embraced them all in turn, and last, laying her head on her mother's shoulder ; then remembering her father was waiting, she clasped her closely, and left the cottage.

There was one piece of kindness I omitted to mention in Mrs. Walker : she considered that when the father and Fanny got to the inn at H—— the poor child would be overlooked, or, at least, badly accommodated ; so she gave her a letter which she desired her to deliver to the landlady.

Little passed during the journey. They did not reach H—— till nine in the evening : Fanny got down in the inn-yard. Joseph Kemp sought a place for his horse, and was eyed by the smart ostlers with that impertinence common to low minds. Joseph was not a man to feel it, for his mind was pre-occupied ; the care of his dear Fanny filled every avenue. He took her hand and led her to the house.

They stood a considerable time, waiting in the kitchen ; at last a waiter said, *'What did you*

want, good man?' Joseph Kemp replied, 'We are come twenty miles, double horse, and we are tired; and we could be glad of a place to sit down in;' and Fanny whispered her father, 'We'd be glad of something to eat.' 'I'm sure I don't know where to put you,' said the waiter. 'Cook, can you let this man and his daughter sit here?' 'I'm sure, I wish there was no traveling people,' said the cook. The waiter turned round: 'Indeed, *this is not a house for traveling people.*' 'I thought it had been,' said Joseph Kemp, quietly. Just then Fanny remembered the letter she had in her pocket, and said, 'Could I speak to the landlady?' Her father gave her a push: 'No, Fanny!' 'Indeed,' said the waiter, with a supercilious air, 'I think my mistress is engaged with company; and we can settle all the business as well without her.'

Fanny's spirit was entirely unchecked. The girl was not what you could call a proud girl; but she had a natural talent for putting back every impertinence; and she replied, 'She had business with the landlady which she could not settle with her servants.' Joseph stared, and Fanny pulled out her letter. The man was greatly surprised; said 'He did not think; he did not know; he could not say. His mistress *might*. He'd go and see if she *could* be spoke with.' Mrs. Jenks was a very important lady, and the idea of a *letter* to be delivered into her *own hands* filled her with

many conjectures : she hoped it was good news. The waiter said it came by a girl who rode double horse behind her father. Mrs. Jenks was the very essence of every thing that was elegant. She had rings on her fingers, necklaces round her neck, and ear-rings in her ears. She was in pure white ; and came tripping along the passages in delicate kid shoes. She eyed Fanny with some surprise ; took the letter, and read as follows :

‘ Mrs. Jenks,—The young person who delivers this letter is one whom I particularly esteem. I beg she and her worthy father may be accommodated with a comfortable sitting-room, good beds, a supper, and a breakfast, at our expense. I hope your poor mother is better, and that your little girl is gaining strength. Believe me your faithful well-wisher,

S. WALKER.

‘ *P—— Rectory.*’

As Mrs. Jenks read this letter, the father and Fanny kept watching her eyes ; and Fanny observed the sharp look of her countenance gradually soften, and the smile succeed. ‘ Waiter !’ ‘ Yes, Ma’am.’ ‘ There’s a nice little room, number twelve.’ ‘ Yes, Ma’am.’ ‘ You’ll show them into that room. And what would you like for supper, Mr. —— ?’ ‘ A little bread and cheese will do well enough for us, Ma’am.’ ‘ Aye, you need not think about it ; it’s to cost you nothing. Madam Walker has sent her orders about that ; so I think *I* shall send in your supper. What o’clock do you go to-morrow ?’ ‘ At six, Madam, we must be off.’

Not to weary the reader’s patience, the land-

lady sent in a roast chicken, mashed potatoes, and tartlets; and Joseph Kemp observed to his daughter, that it went against him to eat. This certainly was not the case with Fanny: she made a most comfortable supper. But Joseph Kemp was so upright, that he begged once more to see the landlady before he went to bed; and told her, if she pleased, he had rather pay for what they had had, for he could not bear to take the advantage of Mrs. W.'s kindness. The landlady told him that could not be, for she should follow the order of the letter: 'and if,' said she, 'good man, what you have ate here troubles you, I don't mind telling you that Mrs. W.'s father was the making of us; and I am very glad of this opportunity to show her I don't forget it. Not a penny of either her money or yours will I ever see for this. Make yourself easy, honest man.'

Two very comfortable beds were provided for the travellers, and they went to sleep, under the impression of Mrs. W.'s kindness and the landlady's gratitude.—Our travellers reached the Valley-Farm, by the help of the honest carrier's horse, and a stage coach, and a few miles' walking, at half-past nine in the morning, after having slept comfortably at the Blue Boar. They got in too late to see Michael, who was at some distance with the people: but Jemima was all kindness, though it was quiet kindness: and Mrs. Finch, who felt her obligations to the brother, did not

suffer the sister to *feel* that she was in a strange country; but addressing her with a look and voice of kindness, took her blue band-box from her hand, and asked 'if she had brought her other box to the Boar, or given any orders concerning it?' Joseph Kemp said, 'I managed pretty well, Madam; for I inquired for one of your waggons, and they said one would be in to-day.' 'That was right,' said Mrs. Finch; 'that's just what I was thinking of. We sent off a lad for your brother directly,' said she to Fanny, whose eyes she saw were wandering in every direction.

Michael was not long ere he returned; and whether joy or sorrow prevailed in Fanny's mind, it is difficult to say, for the poor child smiled through her tears. She clung to her father, she embraced Michael; called him her own dear Michael, and told him more than once she had nobody but him now. He told her 'she would soon be comfortable, for Mrs. Finch was the kindest mistress, and Miss Jemima a very good young lady; and beside, my dear Fanny, I hope you know where to go for comfort? Remember, the earth is the Lord's.'

Mrs. Finch very kindly told Joseph Kemp that she had such a regard for his son, that she hoped he would stay as long as he could make it convenient. 'I am very glad, Madam, to hear as my son gives you satisfaction. He has always been a dutiful boy, and uncommon steady. I thank you,

Ma'am, if you'll give me the favour to sleep here to-night. I must be off to-morrow by then the birds whistle.'

Michael took his father about with him, and Mrs. Finch took Fanny over the house, and told her '*that, all THAT, must be her care, for that Sarah had the care of the dairy, and was cook; which, though she had a girl to assist her, was plenty of employment for one. My Jemima is a very useful girl, and you will find her hand in every thing. I myself see to the linen, and always assist in the ironing; and after having put you in the way, I shall depend on you for in-door comfort, as I do on your excellent brother for every thing without.*'

Fanny courtesied, smiled with the tears in her eyes, listened attentively, and promised nothing. She said, 'If Madam pleased, she should like to change, and make herself comfortable.'

She was shewn into a neat little light closet, in which Mrs. Finch, from regard and respect to her brother, had given her a small bed.

And now, reader, behold our poor Fanny indulging the pleasure (natural to a young mind) of opening her band-box, and examining for the first time the nice things given her at the Rectory. She had found the box heavy. The first thing was a very neat straw bonnet, with a muslin band and bow: in this were packed two nice plain caps, to each of these was pinned a yard and a half of

salmon-coloured ribbon; two nice cane-striped gowns; a plain white fringed shawl, and two of every article of necessary dress; and a pair of strong York-tan gloves: the clothes were marked at length. It is natural to suppose Fanny was pleased. I hope the feeling reader will not be offended to hear that she dried her eyes, and completely dressed herself in one suit. Nature had curled her hair, and as she looked in the small glass, that hung against the white wall, she said, 'I wish *my mother* could see me now!' and she was pleased with the idea of appearing before Michael and her father in her new dress. It had a contrary effect on Mrs. Finch, for she sighed as she looked at her, and said to her daughter, 'this is just what I was afraid of; Fanny Kemp is *too genteel* for my service.' 'O mother,' said Jemima, 'if she is like Mr. Kemp, she'll put her hand to any thing, and look always nice too.' 'True child; true,' said Mrs. Finch.

Joseph Kemp, when he returned from the field with his son, and saw Fanny in her new dress, took her aside, and said, 'Help thee, child; what dost thee dress thyself out for? dost thee think thee'rt come here to sit with thy hands before thee?' 'Dear no, father! but Mrs. Walker gave me these things.' 'Well, child; you don't look like a servant; I suppose Madam meant it for Sunday. Why, you look as genteel as Miss Jemima.' The poor girl liked the rebuke (I am

sorry to say); and her appearance had really one good effect: every servant in the house looked on Mr. Kemp's sister as a superior being; and Michael himself had a brother's weakness, when he watched the light animated motions of his darling Fanny.

The day wore away, and the morrow came; and Joseph Kemp left his children, with a sigh and a tear; commending them to Madam Finch, and, above all, in the silence of his own heart, to God. Fanny entered on her new business with alacrity; and the next morning saw her dressed suitably for her employment, in her neat brown stuff, short sleeves, with a white cuff turned over; with a yellow handkerchief and blue checked apron: and she tripped about, marking the place for every thing; like the little fairy, Order; leaving no trace but that of improvement, wherever her honest industrious hand went. Before eleven she was in the little parlour, courtesying, and praying to know 'if there was any sewing as she could do?' Her mistress was surprised, but she did not express it. She gave her a shirt to make for her son, and observed that she took it without inquiring how to make it or fit it; and she said to Jemima, 'My mind is easy; *that girl* is as clever as her brother.' Jemima was pleased. She had taken a strange liking to Fanny.

We must now leave the Valley-Farm, and follow Moss and Jem Brown to the Brow and the

Rectory. We will pass the journey, as we have travelled it so frequently, and inform the reader that at ten o'clock the day after, Jem scampered down to his uncle's, who greeted him with honest heart, and eyes tearful and joyful. 'But I have a letter for the Reverend,' said he, 'and I must run with it.'

He went to the Rectory; and after Mr. Lascelles had read the letter, he laid it on his library table, and rising from his chair, said, 'I suppose you know the contents of this letter?' 'No, Sir.' 'Pray what do you intend to do with yourself?' The boy blushed; said 'he did not know; he thought he could get work.' 'I should think you had better hire yourself where you will be an accountable being, for I do not think you are born to live free.' Jem blushed still more deeply, and cast his eyes on the ground. 'Young man, I would gladly serve you, but your residence in that gipsy camp is very much against you. I could not recommend you to a friend. I should be sorry your life was made unhappy in my house particularly; and your story is so well known here, that I much fear you would be looked down upon by my servants.'

The fidgety uneasiness of Jem, the twisting of his stick in the side of his shoe round and round, the deepening crimson of his cheek, and his glance, directed to a winding path which led through the shrubbery to the road out of the village, spoke

eloquently to the mind of Mr. Lascelles, though Jem was silent; and the form these varied actions and emotions took with him was, 'No; I'd be off directly.'

Mr. L. meant to prove him, and he asked him this question: 'Tell me sincerely, young man, are you sorry for your sin, or for its consequences?' 'Sir?' said Jem, for he did not rightly understand him. 'I say, are you sorry for sin?' 'I think I am, Sir.'

Here I wish the reader to observe that Jem was never a premeditated liar: the boy was not a coward when he had time for reflection; but, to shun a present evil, to get out of any difficulty, to cover any fault, either of himself or another, a lie was his short cut, and he always took it. Yet, after all, Jem was not a hypocrite, and the penetrating mind of Mr. Lascelles anticipated good from this careful reply.

Reader, beware of prevarication: take the road to truth wherever it leads thee. If thou hast a Bible, search the will of God concerning liars. Take warning from a friend, and remember that no liar can have peace in his own bosom; it injures the character, confuses the mind, multiplies every difficulty, leads to mistrust and disgrace, drives the Spirit of truth far from us, and the end is fearful. Read Revelations, chapter 21st.

Mr. Lascelles rang his bell: Robinson, his personal servant, appeared. 'This is Westrip's

nephew ; do you know of any situation where he could be safe and happy ?' 'The gardener, Sir, wants a helper in the green-house.' 'Well, but about boarding and lodging ? I rather wish to put this young man out of danger.' 'He could board with his uncle, Sir, I dare say.' 'But his uncle has very little influence over him, I'm afraid.' Jem bit his lip, and began to fidget his stick again. 'Do you think, young man, if I engage you at fourteen shillings a-week, and so board yourself at your uncle's, you could steadily keep to your work ?' Jem's temper was almost too high to make any promise, and he twice thought to himself, 'I'd rather keep sheep on Salisbury plain,' but just then Robinson, looking piteously at his master, said, 'Sir, he puts me so much in mind of my poor boy ; you remember him, Sir ?' 'Yes, indeed, *very well*.' 'Come, my lad, do you be steady ; and if master is so kind as to take you, you sha'n't want a friend below stairs.'

Jem, the natural texture of whose mind was to catch at every advantage, and to anticipate promotion from the slightest hints, underwent a complete revolution of feeling, and the place now appeared very desirable. He looked up, thanked Mr. Lascelles, thanked Robinson, made two steps towards the door, and considered every thing settled. The master and the man smiled on each other, and the affair was concluded.

It was a rapid journey back to old Westrip's.

‘Uncle, I am hired to live at the Rectory.’ ‘God be praised!’ said the old man. ‘Do you know that that servant of Mr. Lascelles has taken a great fancy to me, and said something to me about being his son?’ ‘Lawk, Sirs! why he is rich,’ said the old man. ‘Why, Jem, this is promotion.’

Moss’s benevolent heart rejoiced in Jem’s safety; he thought no boy could be otherwise than safe under such a protector: and when, on Wednesday evenings, he attended Mr. Lascelles’ Prayers, and saw Jem regularly come in with the servants, he thought, ‘This looks well, the boy is in the way.’ He *was* in the way. His reverend master said little to him: he saw he was one of the world’s-spirited children; one who, as William said, had no harm in him; who would do no one an ill turn, but to whom the ways of religion were ways of dulness, and all her paths heavy. Mr. Lascelles had therefore treated his diseased mind with wise consideration. He talked a little to him on the subject of prayer: he did not press the Scriptures upon him; but as he was walking in his garden or conservatory, he would make observations on the variety and beauty of plants, and just glance slightly on the wisdom of Him who made them. He was an acute botanist, and completely understood plants and their uses; the herbal train were his familiar acquaintance; a small part of his knowledge would have raised the fame of a good wife in any part of the kingdom.

He saw that James had nothing contemplative in his nature, and to be busy was the leading feature ; and it struck him that fully to employ him was the way to keep him from mischief. One morning, as he was walking in the garden, and Jem stood piping pinks, the gardener beside him, he said, ‘ I am preparing a set of lectures for my Sunday-school : you, Alex, have a family ; perhaps *you* will oblige me so far as to look out a few texts, which you think most likely to attract the notice of children. Perhaps you would help me, James ? ’

James thought himself highly honoured, and replied, with readiness, that he certainly would ; and the next morning brought the following : Genesis, chap. 37, verse 3 ; 1 Samuel, chap. 3, verse 10 ; Psalm 4, verse 8 ; Psalm 20, verse 7 ; Psalm 23, verse 4 ; Matthew, chap. 2, verse 16 ; chap. 26, verses 12 and 13 ; chap. 18, verse 28 ; and chap. 17, verse 2 ; Luke, chap. 23, verse 42 ; Acts, chap. 5, verses 3 and 4 ; Revelations, chap. 1, verse 18.

Mr. Lascelles was extremely pleased. His parish was large, and visiting the sick was always very near his heart, and he often observed to Mrs. Lascelles that he thought he should like to have a curate who would help him : ‘ yet, after all, there are ways, and I must devise them, of communicating knowledge, and of reaching the sick, through the medium of nurses and friends ; ’ and

as Mr. Lascelles' fortune was ample, his plans were proportionally liberal: he had four nurses whom he kept in constant pay, and who were instructed by his cook in making broth, gruel, &c. &c.; and Mrs. Lascelles never failed to give them such books as were useful to read to the sick: they were chiefly written by Mr. Lascelles; they were short, pointed, and continually referred to the Scriptures; his great aim was, to make the people search, comprehend, and study, that sacred book. Jem's readiness in looking out the texts had suggested a new thought to him: he determined to employ a few of the young men of the village in going to read to the men who were sick; and in order to make the visit pleasant to them, they were empowered to see what temporal necessity might be relieved. He never gave them money, lest it should prove a snare: but if there was a blanket wanting, linen of any kind, a ticket for the shop which he had established on a benevolent plan, to make the money of the poor go farther, was granted them in aid of the wants of those they visited. After Jem had resided some months with Mr. Lascelles, he had, by his activity, good humour, and ability, greatly won upon his esteem, and he ventured to ask him if he would oblige him so far as to go and read to old Beal once a-week. Jem would never have chosen this office, but he could not refuse his master, and Mr. L. had wisely chosen this old man;

not that James might do him good, but that he might be useful to James. He was the husband of a wife who tenderly loved him : they had no child surviving. They had wept and smiled together through many a wintry day, and worked through many a sultry harvest ; and it is hardly to be told whether the joys or the sorrows they had shared had most endeared them to each other. Cleanliness and care had preserved every early comfort, and never had Margaret Beal suffered her good man to know a want which her care could supply, or to suffer a privation which her love could bestow. They were both attractive in person : faded, it is true ; but health and cleanliness, and active out-door employment, had preserved the bloom : though they were withered and wrinkled, there was the streak of health remaining in its wonted seat, and the eyes had not lost their fire, and the temper had not been soured by discord, and every wrinkle had been traced by smiles ; or those which sorrow *had* left, had so much the cast of resignation, that they rather dignified than disfigured them. To this worthy couple our animated, but heretofore slippery James bent his way. He stooped, as he swung to the gate of their little garden, to gather a clove pink and a bit of thyme. ‘I never liked sick-rooms ; they are a kind of unwholesome places : beside, they are awful, like ; they seem to me the first steps to the churchyard.’

This was Jem's natural character ; but his heart had been attacked, and he could not now utter these light speeches with the ease he once did. Ere he got to the end of the garden-path, he said, 'God forgive me ! I am a wicked, hard-hearted boy.' Margaret met him : 'Well, James Brown, I am glad to see you. Ah ! I knew your mother, my dear ; and your poor grandmother too. We were at the school together ; she was bigger than I, to be sure. I believe she looked at my first hemming, and the first stocking I knit. Aye, she did many a row of them.' 'How is your husband, Mrs. Beal ?' 'He suffers a deal of pain, my dear ; but I think he is better since he had the couch from Mr. Lascelles : what a good man that is, James ! he thinks of us all.' When James was shown into the pretty little room where John Beal lay, he looked at his clove pink, and this thought passed his mind, 'I have no need of ye here.'

The patient sufferer extended a thin hand : 'If ye be come of your own will, James Brown, it does my heart good to see your father's son.'

James was sincere ; he would not deceive ; but he was not humble, and would not willingly expose himself. He only replied with a smile, 'You remember *my* father ; it's more than I do. I came to read to you ; you have books, I dare say. What would you like ?' 'We have but one book that we ever read ; that is the Bible. Choose

where you will.' 'Suppose we read Joseph and his brethren, or David and Goliath?' The old woman was going to propose some of the Epistles, but John Beal said, 'No, Margaret; he cannot read better. I should like him to read David and Goliath.'

James sat down to read the story. When they came to read that part where Saul armed David with his armour, 'Now, my good boy,' said he, 'observe: David could not use the armour of Saul, he had not proved it. I hope, James, you will never use any defence against worldly enemies, and the enemies of God's cause, in which you cannot feel confidence. I think you will not, James; I think you are an honest lad. You see now, James, how the Philistine cursed, and how he despised David for his youth, and for the simple weapons he was about to use. Now, my dear, if ever you have any enemies, who, like Goliath, seem strong and powerful, think of the replies of David to the Philistine: 'Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, but I come to thee in the Name of the Lord.' Think of this good boy, my dear; the youngest of his father's family. Think how he spent his time; in keeping the sheep: and do look at that 23d Psalm, and when you come again tell me how you like it.'

Jem bade them good evening; and as he walked home, he felt a pleasant lightness of mind, very far removed from his usual gaiety, yet much

nearer allied to happiness. He felt that he had been doing right; and he really had enjoyed the visit. Margaret Beal and her husband seemed to like him. James had, as yet, felt uneasy in the society of good people. Michael had always been very kind to him, but there was a pride about Jem's heart. Michael was but little older than himself; and though he had never taken upon him any undue authority, yet the serious light in which he viewed Jem's faults, which the latter always thought harmless, had worn away the edge of affection on Jem's part; and the society which awes us, and makes us internally uneasy, is never our voluntary choice. In sorrow he was sure of a friend, and he always went to Michael; but if he wished for amusement, or to *enjoy* himself as he called it, never did he seek it in Michael's society.

Not to weary the reader with a long description of the state of Jem's mind, it is sufficient to say, the visits to Beal's cottage were frequent and voluntary; and the Bible opened upon him in a new light: he was not only profited, but delighted; and the activity of his mind, once turned into this channel, instead of his loitering with his back against a wall, to see younger boys play; instead of being the companion of idle maid-servants and giddy-brained boys like himself; he was writing down texts and comparing them; and finding sermons on Sunday, and evening prayer, not only

instructive, but really a pleasure to him.—We must leave him awhile, and visit Farmer Moss at the Brow.

This good man, whose softened heart and affections shone through his conduct, and were evident to every beholder, was not in health. There was a lassitude, a weariness of limb when he walked; relaxation of body, without any visible cause; and as Mr. L. addressed him one day, and seemed to think he looked poorly, he replied, ‘I am poorly, Sir; I have very little appetite; I get up unwillingly;’ and, with a smile, ‘I can’t help thinking I am going home, Sir.’ Mr. Lascelles *looked* and *felt* grieved; and yet he was pleased to mark the composure with which he said this; and he asked him if he would not like to see his sister? ‘Why, Sir, I have very little to say to her as respects herself: she is going on very prosperous; that Valley-farm is in good order; she has got a Joseph there, as I may say; and the Lord blesses every thing he puts his hand to. And then, dear Sir, he’s so little for himself, that when I spoke to him about having his wages doubled, as they *ought* to be for the next year, he begged I would not say a word; that he was quite contented that he was able to send his father ten pounds a-year: this may content him, Sir, but it don’t content me. My sister has got a plenty, but I sha’n’t forget her; I shall leave her five hundred pounds, I shall leave Jemima five hundred, and I shall

leave the boy five hundred : but I mean to leave Michael the lease of my farm, the stock, and the rest and residue of my estate, which will make him easy ; and I shall desire him to allow a poor drunken cousin of mine two shillings a-day, and to give him clothes twice in the year. I could not think of the poor creature wanting, but I am sure, if I was to leave him all I had, it would only kill him the sooner ; and by fastening him on Michael, and by this daily allowance, I think I give the poor soul a chance.' Mr. Lascelles entirely approved of the farmer's arrangement of his affairs ; and smiling benevolently, said, ' My good friend, and so you have Canaan full in view. Well, you shall go over dry-shod : these waters shall not prevail ; when thou walkest through them He will be with thee.' There was a languor in Moss's smile. Mr. Lascelles gave him his arm, and accompanied him home ; and gave orders to Robinson, before he went out, to beg Mr. Floyd would meet him at the Brow-farm. He came down accordingly, and pronounced it dropsy on the chest. The usual remedies were tried ; but the farmer got so ill that it was thought advisable to send for the family from the Valley, and particularly to desire Michael might come. William went on this errand, and was to remain to assist at the Valley while Michael was detained at the Brow.

The whole party arrived : it was a relief to Moss to see them. Though there was no appa-

rent expectation of a near departure, yet some one at hand to whom he was dear gave a transient brilliance to his eye and an air of cheerfulness to his manner. It was the doctor's opinion he might linger many months; but his universal debility made him fear for the event. Mr. Lascelles thought it right that some one should remain; and at length Mrs. Finch was prevailed on to leave Jemima. Mr. Lascelles daily visited the farmer, and told his excellent lady that he really went to learn, and was never disappointed. One morning during Mrs. Finch's stay, when Mr. Lascelles was sitting by his bedside, he thus addressed him: 'I have been telling my sister if she had had two boys, I should have thought it my duty to have left the lease of my farm and the stock to one of them; but as it is, we are both agreed, Sir, that that good lad deserves what I have done for him.' 'Indeed we are,' said Mrs. Finch, with a glow of satisfaction on her benevolent countenance.

Michael returned with Mrs. Finch, and found all well. James Finch had behaved very steadily, and Fanny was delighted to look again on her dear brother. Affairs went on in the same train. The spring advanced: they received weekly accounts from the Brow, which Mr. Lascelles was so good as to write; and he was extremely pleased with the conduct of Jemima, of whom he spoke in the highest terms. Sometimes there was a flatter-

ing hope that the farmer might recover ; then, again, he sunk, and hope fled.

While matters were in this fluctuating state, as Michael was one morning standing in the porch, Fanny passed him ; and he looked up, after buttoning the last button of his gaiter : ‘ My dear Fan, have you been crying ? ’ ‘ No, brother, I am not crying ; but I cannot keep the water out of my eyes.’ ‘ Why you must have a very bad cold, my dear.’ ‘ It is not like a cold, neither. I am so heavy all over ; and I am very hot. Do feel me.’ ‘ Indeed you are, my love.’ She turned to her brother : ‘ Oh ! I wish I was with my mother.’ ‘ My dear Fanny, make yourself easy ; if this is any thing more than a cold, your mother shall be with you.’ He called for Stephen ; he was not in the way. He had the presence of mind to desire Fanny to go and sit down quietly in his bedroom ; found his mistress, and said, ‘ I am sorry, Madam, to alarm you, but I greatly fear Fanny has the measles ; has your son had this disorder ? ’ Mrs. Finch’s countenance instantly betrayed her state of mind : she sunk, and seemed to anticipate evil. ‘ I have sent for Stephen from the field ; I have one question to put to him, and then I think I can quietly arrange the whole.’ Mrs. Finch was very amiable ; but in any thing which concerned her children, her want of confidence in God was most evident : she said, James had never had the measles ; but she should be very sorry, it would

go to her heart, to put Fanny out. Michael looked very decided, thanked her for her kindness, but he said he should remove Fanny within an hour (he hoped). Mrs. Finch was going to say more, but Michael, with a respectful, firm, and penetrating look, which seemed to say don't let us talk nonsense, said, 'Fanny *must* be removed, Madam.'

*Mrs. F.* And who is to attend her?

*Michael.* I will let you know as soon as I have spoken to Stephen.

Mrs. Finch left Michael, and was in that awkward state of mind which most people have felt, at some period in their lives, when they press a thing outwardly, while they secretly determine it shall not take place.

Michael was the last young man to favour deceit: he wished his mistress to suffer, because she was practising that which was incompatible with true piety.

By this time Stephen arrived. When he heard what Michael had to say, he replied, 'Fanny *must not* be moved.' 'Fanny *must* be moved.' 'She shall *not be* moved,' said Stephen. Michael looked at him, 'Who is to prevent it?' 'I, Sir; I say it would endanger her life' [blushing deep as scarlet]. 'Nonsense, boy! do you step directly for Mr. Powell.' He did not need bidding twice; and while he was gone, Michael busied himself in doing kind offices for Fanny; but his mind was full of Stephen's boldness, and it gave him no

small uneasiness when he thought on Fanny's youth, and his responsibility for her happiness. He felt Stephen's words opened upon him a new scene of care ; and though he loved Stephen more than any young man upon earth, he was not glad of the discovery. As soon as the doctor came, Stephen was at Michael's bedroom-door : ' Sir, Mr. Powell is come ;' and following Michael down stairs, ' It's just as I thought, Sir !' ' As you thought ? what ?' ' It will be a very dangerous thing, Sir, moving Fanny ; I can't bring my mind to't.' Michael made a full stop upon the stairs : ' I wish to hear no more of your mind, Stephen.' This thought crossed his mind : what a powerful principle is this, which can give a modest Christian lad courage decidedly to oppose, who otherwise has never betrayed a will of his own !

The doctor confirmed their fears : it was the measles ; she might be removed, if she were removed instantly. Stephen lingered to hear what the doctor said, and he thought the next best thing to having her under his own eye was to get her to his father's ; and as soon as the doctor was gone, he came forward with this proposal : ' All my brothers and sisters, Sir, have had the measles, down to the baby : we have a very tight upper room ; and my mother is a very clean woman, and she will be proud to attend your sister, Sir, as if she were her own child.' ' I believe, Stephen, I

must accept your offer; but I shall go to your mother first.'

Accordingly Michael went to the Level-Bit, a place he had never visited before, for reasons known only to himself. Mrs. Meredith thought he was proud, when in fact he was only prudent. When the mother saw him, she instinctively stroked down her apron, as though she wished to appear to the best advantage: there was no need of this, for the habitual cleanliness of that family, the out-door and in-door neatness, made themselves, and all belonging to them, objects of admiration. 'Will you please to be seated, Sir?' Michael excused himself, saying he was in great haste. He first asked her if all the children had had the measles. She was surprised by the question; but replied, 'Yes, Sir; down to the babe on my knee.' He then told her his present distress, and she was ready to follow up all Stephen's invitation. Before Michael quitted the Level-Bit he stepped back and said, 'Mrs. Meredith, your son has greatly surprised me this morning, and indeed he has made me rather uneasy.' Ellen, who received every secret of Stephen's heart, looked conscious, and said, 'Well, Sir, to be sure, my Stephen is but a working lad; and, no doubt, you look higher for your sister: but though he is my boy, he is a good boy, and a good-looking boy, and I hope he may do in the world.' Michael

said, 'Don't mistake me, Mrs. Meredith; but before I tell you my sentiments, let me know if I may rely on what I say resting between you and your husband. Ellen Meredith promised that she would do exactly as Michael desired. 'Then,' said Michael, 'rest assured, there is not a lad upon this earth I should so soon wish for a brother as Stephen; industrious, sweet-tempered, cleanly, devout, a sincere worshipper of God in spirit and in truth. But, Mrs. Meredith, if my Fanny does not already know of this preference, I beg she may *not* know it for at least a year to come. If her life is spared,' and the tear came into Michael's eye, 'most willingly should I give her to my beloved Stephen; but she is very ill, Mrs. Meredith, and God only knows!'

Ellen, who had nursed all her babes with great success, was not at all alarmed; she knew what was good, and she would take care, and she did not at all doubt. 'Under the blessing of a kind Providence, no more do I, Mrs. Meredith; but in present circumstances you will see the prudence of silence.' Could the reader have seen Ellen Meredith during Michael's speech, he would have marked how the mother's heart drank in the praises of her son Stephen. She promised every thing that Michael desired, assured him that Stephen had never informed Fanny of his preference, and they parted mutually pleased with each other.

Michael stepped to the only inn in the village, hired the only post-chaise, and in one hour removed his beloved Fanny from his own bedroom to the clean quiet Level-Bit. And, to ease Fanny's beating heart, he assured her that, as soon as their mother could be fetched, she should be with her.

Young Ellen Meredith went to the Valley, to take Fanny's place; and Stephen was despatched to P——, to fetch Mrs. Kemp. This patient Christian heard Stephen's tidings with so much resignation, that Stephen thought her hard-hearted; he could not conceive how any mother could hear of such a girl as Fanny being so ill, and say only, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' Mrs. Meredith received the excellent mother with the greatest attention, and Michael took care that nothing should be wanting at the Level-Bit.

As the shades of evening drew on, Elizabeth Kemp knelt by the side of her dear child; prayed fervently for a blessing on the means used for her recovery; and, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, closed every petition with, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' Ellen had frequently been spoken to on religious subjects by her son Stephen: he had always spoken with respect; but the subject was unpleasant to her; it had only been tolerated because her Stephen said it. She felt that she was an excellent mother, and was ready to say, what would they have more?

She did not remember that the first thing in religion was to love God : indeed, Ellen Meredith was like many other excellent wives and mothers, apt to idolize her husband and her children. Ellen rejoiced when any one said, ‘What a nice family those Merediths are !’ but she was a stranger to the joy which David felt when he said, ‘I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.’ The whole of Sunday morning was spent in dressing her family and getting the dinner ; the greater part of the time they were at church in the afternoon was spent in dressing herself, and in clearing away the dinner. Thus sabbath after sabbath passed, as though she had no soul. But now she saw a mother using every means for the recovery of her child, begging a blessing on every medicine, and practising at the bedside of a very lovely daughter the last earthly virtue, resignation ; and resignation, too, to the loss of so sweet a creature ! She was of Stephen’s mind, and the virtue she could not practise she censured.

The very evening of Stephen’s return from P——, Michael took him up and down the gravel-walk of their neat garden, and said, ‘I am very much obliged to you, Stephen, for the kind interest you take in my sister, and for the active attention you have paid to my mother.’ ‘You are not at all obliged to me for that, Sir ; I could not help it : Fanny’s as much to *me* as to *you*, and *more*.’

‘I would just mention one thing to you, Stephen. I am grieved to tell you an important truth: I have no reason to think Fanny a religious character. She has good habits, honest principles, and a sweet disposition; but I do not think the pride of her heart has been brought low. You can best tell how far such an objection weighs with you, but I know how it *ought*: we are commanded to pluck out right eyes, if they interfere with our eternal peace.’ ‘But, Sir, I am sure Fanny is always very attentive to every thing serious.’ ‘She is, Stephen; and I hope this sickness may be very useful to her. I assure you it would be very grateful to my heart to confide her to one whom I love as a brother: but I have seen unequal unions produce great discord, and divide families. I charge you, Stephen, to have clear proof that Fanny is in earnest before you say one word on the subject; and even should this sickness be of use to Fanny, which I trust it may, give me your promise to wait one year. Fanny is only eighteen, you are one-and-twenty; you have plenty of time before you, if a gracious Providence sees fit to continue your existence.’

The kindness of Michael’s declaration restored Stephen to a more quiet, rational state of mind than he had been in for some time past. They were turning towards the house, when Michael laid his hand on Stephen’s shoulder, and said, ‘Mind, Stephen, while Fanny continues at the

Level-Bit, I forbid your going there, unless any part of your family should immediately require your attention.' Stephen promised, not very willingly it is true; but he did promise.

Mrs. Finch was all kindness now her heart was at rest about James. Fanny wanted nothing; Mrs. Kemp wanted nothing: and this good woman had but one concern during her stay at the Level-Bit; and this was, how she might improve the religious principles of Meredith and his wife, and lead Fanny to profit by her illness. Often would she say to her host, as she walked about their nice garden, 'What are these things, William Meredith, if they lead us not to Him who made them? The pollution of the first paradise was caused by disobedience to God's command, and a desire to live independent of Him: hiding from His presence followed; but let us be thankful we are brought nigh.' All this was an unknown tongue to Meredith and his wife; and when they were alone, they could only say to one another that 'twas a fine thing to have learning, and that Mr. Kemp's mother was a very sensible person.

Fanny's disorder had been of the mildest kind; she was soon well, soon gay, and too gay, her mother thought: often had she occasion to remind her, how the goodness of God had raised her to life and health; and though it became her to enjoy this blessing, she wished to see her more quiet and composed. But Ellen Meredith, with her husband

and family, thought Fanny the sweetest creature. Rose Meredith would creep in to dress her, the lovely pet boy would come to kiss her, William had always a flower for her; and all this attention so delighted Fanny, that her mother said, with a smile and a sigh, 'I hope, child, thee'lt not forget thyself.'

As Fanny was quite recovered, each one returned to his post. Elizabeth Kemp returned to P——, where she was gladly received by her anxious family.

## CHAPTER VI.

FARMER MOSS'S ILLNESS ASSUMES A MORE SERIOUS CHARACTER.

—HE IS VISITED BY MRS. FINCH AND MICHAEL KEMP.—HE EXPERIENCES THE CONSOLATIONS OF RELIGION IN AN EMINENT DEGREE.—CONVERSATION BETWEEN FARMER MOSS, MR. LASCELLES, AND MICHAEL KEMP.—VISIT OF FARMER NEWTON—DEATH AND BURIAL OF FARMER MOSS—MICHAEL KEMP IS LEFT IN POSSESSION OF THE BROW FARM.—HIS DIFFIDENCE IN ACCEPTING THE BEQUEST.—MR. LASCELLES AND MR. WALKER ADVISE HIM ON THE OCCASION.—HE VISITS HIS PARENTS.—SERMON OF MR. LASCELLES ON THE DEATH OF FARMER MOSS.—CONVERSATION BETWEEN MICHAEL KEMP AND JAMES BROWN.—CONDUCT OF MICHAEL KEMP IN HIS NEW SITUATION.—STEPHEN SETS OFF WITH MICHAEL FOR THE BROW FARM.—FAREWELL LETTER FROM MICHAEL KEMP TO MRS. FINCH.

FOR about a month things went on in their usual train, when a letter from Jemima again summoned her mother to the bedside of Farmer Moss. There was a postscript, that her uncle would not wish to distress his sister, but if Mr. Kemp could come with her, he should be very glad to see him; and as Stephen and Williamson were both so well-principled, there was no hesitation. The travellers set off immediately. They reached the Brow. William had come to meet them a mile from the place, to inform them his master was rather better that day, and was expecting them with great satisfaction: that Miss Jemima thought it better

to send, that they might come in cheerful. This was indeed considerate, for Mrs. Finch was spiritless, and weary with her journey; looking on every object through her own gloomy feelings, weeping and drying away the tear, and putting a sad constraint on her aching heart. This little good news had the happiest effect, and ere they got to the farm the traces of sorrow had disappeared. Jemima met them at the door, and ‘Dear mother!’ and ‘My own good maid!’ was all they could say. ‘Your uncle is better, my love?’ ‘A little better, my dear mother; yet he is very ill: but it is a pleasure to be with him; I would not but have been with him!’ Mrs. Finch could not comprehend it. They soon went to the chamber of the sick man.

Moss received his sister with great pleasure, and the colour that lit up his pale face deceived her at her first entrance: she thought him better; and she turned to Jemima, ‘My dear, your uncle does not always lie in bed, I hope?’ Moss, smiling, said, ‘No, my dear; they let the old man do pretty much as he likes: I get up when I can’t lie, and I lie when I can’t sit up; so I sometimes turn night into day, and day into night. But all times are pleasant to me, my dear Jane, for I have the best company, and we are all agreed. And my dear Jemima, she hasn’t come here for nothing, sister: she has got a rich inheritance.’ Mrs.

Finch could not understand it; she concluded her brother had altered his will. The tear came into Jemima's eye, and she hid her face in her handkerchief. Mrs. Finch whispered her, 'Ah! my child, that's just like me, thee'dst rather keep thy uncle than gain all the inheritances.' Jemima would have suffered her mother's error to pass, but Moss called out, 'No, no, sister; she's sitting at the feet of her Master; she has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her; she is clothed, and in her right mind.' Mrs. Finch thought, it's more than my poor brother is.

The day passed, and Michael had spent an hour with his master's hand in his, and the good creature bolstered up in his bed: 'No night there, Michael; for the Lamb is the light thereof. No night here, Michael,' said he, pointing to his bosom, 'for the Lord is my light, and is become my salvation. What could all the world do for me now? I have tried it, I have thought of it; broken cisterns, Michael. There's my pretty Jemima, she that holds my head when I cough; she that weeps when I suffer. What can she do for me? She can only go to the river's brink with me. No, no; I must have a stronger arm; and I have it, Michael: there's the joy; I have it. O what can make a death-bed easy? None but Jesus, none but Jesus! I should not like to come back, Michael. I've had some pretty prospects as I lay here.

Mrs. Finch was gliding into the room at this moment, and Mr. Lascelles was behind her. She turned back to him, and closed the door again.

*Mrs. Finch.* There, Sir; it's just as I told you; he is light-headed again.

*Mr. L.* O, Madam, I've seen nothing of that sort. He is light-hearted, but I think his head as clear as yours and mine.

Mr. Lascelles now entered. 'Well, Sir,' said the poor sufferer, 'this is a pleasant meeting of us here all together.'

Michael rose; and Mr. Lascelles, bowing from his height, with a look of penetrating benevolence, said, 'Young man, I am rejoiced to see you;' and, with that quiet grace with which he did every thing, drew his chair to the bedside, and bent his looks towards the sick man. Jemima and her mother stood by the window, and Michael at the bottom of the bed, with that settled, humble, affectionate composure which so remarkably distinguished him.

Mr. Lascelles began: 'In my Father's house are many mansions;'—the Farmer went on, with his eyes sparkling: 'if it were not so, I would have told you.' Yes, Sir; He is gone to prepare a place for me. Sometimes, Sir, I have had a fear whether He was gone to prepare a place for *me*; but then, when I read that 'not only for them, but for all that believe on Him through their word;'—Well, Sir, I won't talk of doubts and

fears ; there 's no use in 't. The Good Shepherd is with me ; and you, my earthly shepherd, don't forget me. You've been a blessing to me, Mr. Lascelles ; and that boy has been a blessing to me ; and there 's my pretty Jemima.' Jemima thought he called her ; she was at the bedside in a moment : ' No, my good maid ; I didn't want you. We are looking to the hills, Jemima ; the everlasting hills, seeing goodly sights, my love.' ' Those are fine lines of Watts's,' said Mr. Lascelles :

' But now the everlasting hills  
Through every chink appear ;  
And something of the joy she feels,  
While she 's a prisoner here.' '

' That 's very true, Sir ; that 's very true ; I can feel it.' ' I think you will be glad to hear,' said Mr. Lascelles, looking at Michael, ' that James Brown is under deep concern about his soul. He came into my study last night precisely in the same state as the jailer, ' What must I do to be saved ? ' The reply was brief ; you know it, Michael.' ' Ah ! ' said Moss ; ' ' believe on the Lord Jesus Christ ' ' [lengthening out the words as he spoke]. ' But James Brown is a character,' said Mr. Lascelles, ' I have rarely met with. There is lightness, and yet truth and steadiness at bottom. I am careful not to mislead him ; for when in any distress, he catches at air, and I am careful not to give him comfort too soon, lest he should make an unsound believer.'

‘He is in good hands,’ said Michael respectfully : ‘he was too much for me, but God has put him under your care ; and these convictions coming when he is in no outward trouble, give me hope that his sorrow for sin is genuine.’

*Mr. Lascelles.* I think and hope it is. He has visited a very good man in this village, lately, who has great hopes of him. He seems to pursue his present course with the same spirit and activity which he heretofore employed upon worldly objects ; and there was a sincerity about him which I always liked.

The days passed in delightful conversation, though the paroxysms of Moss’s disorder grew more and more frequent ; and one morning Jemima ran to the bedside of her mother, ‘O my dear mother ! I think my kind uncle is going. We have sent for the physician, and Mr. Kemp is gone for Mr. Lascelles.’

They were all soon assembled around the bed of Moss. He could not speak just then, but in the intervals of suffocation had a smile for each ; and Mr. Lascelles, in pursuance of his office : ‘He is faithful who hath promised ; the everlasting arms are under your head ; and though worms destroy this body, yet in thy flesh thou shalt see God. This mortal shall put on immortality.’

Moss’s eye was fixed on his reverend friend : Michael held his post at the bottom of the bed ; Jemima was kneeling behind her uncle, raising

him, as occasion required. Mrs. Finch was in a further part of the room, talking to the Doctor, and Moss heard him say, 'Mr. L. is a good man, certainly; but it is not judicious in the state your brother is.' Moss, who had recovered his speech, and had never lost his composure of mind, said, 'My dear sister, do come; and do you, Sir, come; and let me speak to you both. You have thought, Sister, that what I have said to you was very strange; I know you have: it is strange till the heart is changed.—Oh! Sir, [looking at the Doctor,] you can do nothing for me now. You know all your prescriptions have failed. My disorder is too strong for human help. Now let me try to do you some good. I hear you never go to church. I have heard you don't like to see Mr. Lascelles in the bedroom of the sick. [Seeing the Doctor colour up highly, and about to take his leave] What, Doctor! will you leave a poor man whom you will most likely never see again? and will you leave him in anger, because he tells you the truth? give me your hand: you are not young; you must soon follow me. Oh! think of your soul, dear Sir; think of your soul! Do you think, Doctor, if I was to see a person walking in the dark, who didn't know the country, d'ye think as I wouldn't be frightened to see him stepping off the Brow? D'ye think as I wouldn't catch him by the arm? Do you think I should mind pulling him a little roughly to save his life?

Now, Doctor, you don't read the Scriptures, I know : I am afraid you don't believe them.'

The Doctor had recovered his surprise, collected his scattered thoughts, resumed what he thought his dignity, and was waiting with frigid and stoical feeling (or rather numbness) till Moss should finish ; then, drawing his hand from Moss's, and adjusting his collar, said, with a forced smile, 'Really, Sir, I do not comprehend your allusion.' 'Poor soul ! I thought he did not' [looking at Mr. Lascelles].

Mr. Lascelles was silent. But, again, seeing the Doctor was about to depart, Moss said, 'Thank you, Doctor ; thank you for all your kindness to me ; may God reward you sevenfold ! May what is dark become clear as day, written with a sun-beam on your conscience !' And then, as though there was no creature present, and with his eyes closed, 'O Lord, have mercy upon his soul !' The Doctor escaped, being glad to avoid further conversation.

It is worthy of remark how little the constant sight of disease and death affects the human mind : 'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' If they read not the Scriptures, if they value not the exhortations of the ministers of God, every day's experience proves that the most awful sight which humanity presents, shall work no permanent change.

Moss had several times sent for Farmer Newton : he had always promised to come ; and when Kemp had called the day before, had told him that he could not come, it hurted him so bad. Michael replied, ‘I hope you will, Sir. I think you will be sorry if any thing happens to my poor master. I think you’ll be sorry if you have not seen him : you’ve always been such good friends, Sir.’

*Newton.* Aye, so we have, indeed : we be old companions.

This conversation had its desired effect ; and as Mrs. Finch retired from shewing the doctor out, she came on tip-toe to the bedside, saying, ‘ Brother, here is Farmer Newton ; should you like to see him ? ’ The Farmer smiled, and said, ‘ Yes.’

Newton came in ; and Mr. Lascelles moved from the bedside to make way for him. As he quitted it, he pressed the farmer’s hand : ‘ God bless you ! Sir.’ The farmer only replied by pressing it.

‘ You’ve come at last,’ said Moss. ‘ I thought I should never see you.’

The tear was in Farmer Newton’s eye : ‘ I’ve had a cold, and my wife ha’n’t been very well ; and we’ve had some dull weather lately ; and, besides it do cut me to the heart to see you look so bad.’

Moss made no reply ; but turning to Jemima, said, ‘ My dear, do you and your mother raise me up a bit higher. Michael, bring me the cushion of the great chair. There ; now I’m easier.’

The colour which had risen to his brow gently subsided; and, after a minute's pause, 'Old friend! we must all die. But there's nothing there to hurt you. I am going to be happier than ever I have been here. I've been a prosperous man; but I am getting old, I could not have kept it. I've kind friends, but I must not stay with them! It's a great matter, old friend, to say I am ready, I am willing to go. I shall have a new body; and all I leave here will, I hope, follow me:' and he kept his eye fixed upon his sister.

Farmer Newton did not want kindness of heart; and he was struck with all his old friend said: but his heart was like dry ground; the impression of the dews of heaven was soon absorbed. It was 'Yes' to every thing: yes and a tear, and the matter was ended. Poor Moss saw and felt that he made no impression. Weary and exhausted, he remained silent.

Farmer Newton was not sorry to withdraw from a scene in which he felt and discovered nothing but gloom.

Johanna and William sat up with him that night, and about three o'clock alarmed the family. They were soon round him: with Jemima's hand in one of the Farmer's hands, and Michael's in the other, he said, 'God bless you! the angel of His presence——' and he finished his sentence in Heaven.

Silently they retired. There was sorrow with-

out regret : they felt that every tear they shed was selfish. 'He is risen to life immortal !' said Michael, as he closed the door.

Michael immediately set out for the Valley. He was to bring James back with him on the following Thursday. His journey was mournful ; but he found it good to meditate on this change from time to eternity. He could not help saying to himself, as he rode beneath the blue arch of heaven, 'He is beyond the reach of seasons ! 'He shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on him, nor any heat ; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living water ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' I have had a great loss ; I have lost a friend who loved me : one with whom I could take sweet counsel'—and the tears chased one another down his youthful cheek. He was so absorbed, that he was riding through the turnpike-gate without remembering he had to pay ; and the man came up rather rudely, and demanded the money. The interruption was good, as it enabled him to pursue his journey with more vigour, remembering that he had many miles to go before he could reach home. He was obliged to rest that night, and did not get to the Valley till the morning. Fanny ran out to meet him :

*Fanny.* My own Michael ! how is your master ?

*Michael.* Would that we were all as well, my Fanny! He is in the presence of his Saviour.

*Fanny.* And how is my mistress, and Miss Jemima?

*Michael.* As well as possible, considering their loss.

*Fanny.* What will be done at the Brow?

*Michael.* I know not; for there is no one fit to take the lead there. Have you heard from your mother, Fanny, since I was away?

*Fanny.* Yes, my dear brother, I have; and they are all well at home, except poor Joe: he has had the ear-ache sadly. And my mother says he is so impatient, that he almost wears her out.

*Michael.* Ah! my dear; it's a sad pain: none but those who have it, can tell how hard it is to bear.

Every being at the Valley rejoiced to see Michael; and Stephen hung at his chamber-door to ask a few questions concerning the death of his master. Michael invited him in, and related the whole; and when he withdrew, he said, 'O Sir, let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' Michael replied, 'And mine also;' and they parted for the night.

Mourning was provided; and the travellers departed with a heavy heart on their affecting journey. They did not reach the Brow till eight in the morning of Thursday. They found Jemima and her mother in tranquil pursuit of their sorrow-

ful duties. Several of the neighbouring farmers were invited ; and among them Farmer Newton. Mr. Lascelles attended at the house, and every thing was conducted in the most respectable, modest manner. A long train of farmers, domestics, voluntary poor, and little children, hand-in-hand, with chastened looks, followed the slow procession down the hill. The singers at church met the corpse with a slow dirge ; and Michael's heart throbbed almost audibly, as his reverend friend pronounced, 'I am the resurrection and the life ; whoso believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.'

To those who have never witnessed a funeral in a village, faint would be the idea they could form of its solemnity. There no indifferent eye witnesses the scene : every infant has a sigh and a last piteous look for the departed. 'Dust to dust,' and the rattling mould thrown in, was the signal ; and the tears gushed out amain from every eye ; and Mr. Lascelles himself could scarce utter the parting blessing. He walked home with them to the Brow, and Michael had some sweet consoling conversation with him ere they entered the house. After needful refreshment, Mrs. Finch requested him to read the will of the deceased.

When they came to that part where Michael was particularly mentioned, the honest surprise and even revolting of his feelings was visible. He put his handkerchief to his face and went out of the room.

As soon as Mr. Lascelles had finished the will, he retired. Michael had waited for him.

*Michael.* I dare not, Sir—I dare not take it ; it would be such a stain to religion. What would my mistress think of it? No, indeed! I am satisfied, Sir; ‘having food and raiment, I am therewith content.’

*Mr. Lascelles.* For your mistress, my good young man, she is perfectly satisfied with her brother’s arrangement; and it was settled on all hands that it was best you should remain ignorant of the disposition of your master’s property, till his will became law.

*Michael.* I cannot tell you how I feel, Sir; never before have *such* sensations had place in my mind. I feel now that I am open to the charge of fawning on my master, to gain his property; and if I come to this Brow-farm, and should be suspected of any base conduct—

*Mr. Lascelles.* Come, come, young man; leave your good name with God: while your hands are clean, and your heart upright before Him, He will not suffer your enemies to prevail over you. In this parish I have some influence. Depend on me for repelling every false charge; and that not for your sake, but for Him whose cause is nearer to my heart than any thing earthly.

He left him, full of an uneasy sensation, to which he could not give a name. He was sitting in the first kitchen, very mournful, when Jemima

came up : ' Mr. Kemp, we were wondering where you were ; my mother wants to see you.'

Michael had never answered a call of Mrs. Finch's with so much reluctance. When he went in, she said, ' I hope, Mr. Kemp, you may live many years to enjoy this house, and all things my dear brother has left you.'

Michael wept, and held his handkerchief to his face. ' I can never forget your kindness, Madam ; but I cannot be happy to injure you and yours.' ' O, Mr. Kemp,' said Jemima, ' we knew it all ; we knew that your kind heart wouldn't approve it, and that is the reason my mother never mentioned it to you.' ' Depend upon it, Mr. Kemp,' said Mrs. Finch, ' all my friends shall know how little you desired this property ; and if my son should grow up such a young man as you are, so honest, so generous, I am sure if he had not a shilling in the world, I should never be uneasy about him ; for a good name is better than great riches, and that I see.'

No greedy miser ever more eagerly sought to accumulate property, than our honest Michael to clear his profession of religion of every stain, and he concluded by saying to Mrs. Finch, ' If you could spare me two days, Madam—I could not accept the property till I have seen Mr. Walker ; and if you will grant me this favour, I will set off immediately.'

Mrs. Finch looked at her daughter with an

expression of surprise and admiration. She said, 'Mr. Kemp, you are your own master ; you are in your own house ; every thing here is yours ; and yet you ask *my* leave.'

*Michael.* Madam, I consider myself your servant. My time is yours.

*Mrs. Finch.* You did not hear, Mr. Kemp, what you are to do for our poor cousin : he is to come to you every day for two shillings ; and you are to clothe him twice a-year.

*Michael.* Do you mean poor old Richard Moss, Ma'am, who used to give my master so much trouble ?

*Mrs. Finch.* Yes ; the same.

*Michael.* Well, Madam, I must see Mr. Walker, if you please ; and if he thinks it right that I should come here, I will then talk with you on the subject.

He accordingly set out, promising to be back on Saturday, that they might all go to the church together on Sunday. During the journey Michael was planning what he should do in case Mr. Walker thought it right he should accept it. He wished to send for Stephen ; for he was determined, unless he was there himself, not to leave Fanny under the same roof with him. But he was fearful Mrs. Finch would not be able to spare Stephen, who had become so trustworthy that she could confide in him entirely. He meant unreservedly to speak to Mr. Walker of every thing ;

and thus, in ruminating, in prayer for direction, every now and then a whelming tide of feeling for his lost master (the excellent Moss) brought the tears to his eyes and a sigh to his bosom. He determined to put up at the first inn; take his quiet refreshment there, order his bed, go down to Mr. Walker's, converse freely with him, but not to see his father and mother till all was settled.

He arrived at the Rectory: was sorry to hear from the servant that Mr. Walker had sprained his ankle, and was confined to his study. The servant, who remembered Michael from a lad, ran gladly to inform his master who was come. He soon returned, desiring he would walk in. There he found his excellent friend reclining on a sofa, looking rather pale from the confinement; Miss Sophia standing by her father, and Mrs. Walker sitting as his nurse. Miss Sophia dropped a kind expression, bent gently, and passed from the room.

Mr. Walker's hand was immediately extended: 'Truly glad—truly glad to see you, my good young man.' Mrs. Walker said, 'Pray sit down, Mr. Kemp.'

Michael looked full of business. 'I have a long story for you, Sir; I hope I shall not be troublesome.' 'I hope all is well,' said Mr. Walker, looking with some anxiety. 'Yes, Sir,' said Michael. They suffered him to relate every thing that had passed without any interruption, excepting that now and then, during the relation

of Moss's illness, Mr. Walker took off his spectacles, and wiped them and put them on again. But when they came to that part where they heard the reason of Michael's visit, Mrs. Walker looked at her husband with an eye of sparkling approbation that seemed to say, 'this is just what I should expect from him.'

'And what do you mean to do, Sir?' said Mr. Walker.

*Michael.* You must decide that, Sir.

*Mr. Walker.* I do decide it: but, before I speak, what says Mr. Lascelles?

*Michael.* He says I ought to accept it.

*Mr. Walker.* What says Mrs. Finch.

*Michael.* The same, Sir.

*Mr. Walker.* I am entirely of their opinion. What does your father say?

*Michael.* I have not seen my father, Sir. The poverty of our family is well known to you, and I was afraid they would not be able to give right judgment; so I did not choose to consult them.

*Mr. Walker.* Right.

'Pray,' said Mrs. Walker, 'how is your own mind disposed?'

*Michael.* To say, Madam, that the power of doing good to my family is not a pleasure to me, would be wrong.

*Mrs. Walker.* And perhaps you would like to marry, Mr. Kemp?

*Michael.* Not at present, Madam.

*Mrs. Walker.* [Smiling.] Perhaps you have some one in your eye?

*Mr. Walker.* Hush! hush! my dear; we have no right to inquire.

‘Fare thee well!’ said Mrs. Walker, rising. ‘Michael knows I wish him happy.’

*Michael.* Thank you, Madam; you have always been very kind to me.

After Mrs. Walker was gone out, Michael said, ‘Sir, I should never have taken the liberty of intruding my private feeling on your ear, but as Mrs. Walker has touched that point, I will just say, a very nice young person I have sometimes met (the sister of a young fellow I have had under my care for some years) returns often to my thoughts; but though she is every thing I could wish as a moral character, I have no reason to think her mind has as yet been humbled for sin, or that her virtue is more than morality would teach. She has been brought up in habits of the strictest economy and honesty. Her person is remarkably pleasing; so much so, that I do not trust myself to speak *to* her or *of* her; and I only do it now, that I may have no reserve with you, Sir.

*Mr. Walker.* And your objection is only on the ground of want of piety; in all other respects, she is the person you would choose?

*Michael.* Exactly, Sir.

*Mr. Walker.* And she knows nothing of it?

*Michael.* Nothing, Sir. I hardly know it myself, for this is the first time I ever spoke of it; and I'm very much afraid of liking her too well, and therefore I will say no more of her at present. —Suppose, Sir, if I accept this farm, I was to pay Mrs. Finch a hundred a-year out of it; I think I should be easier. I think I should be more like her bailiff.

After a few minutes' silence, his reverend friend said, 'Give me your arm [turning himself gently on the sofa with Michael's assistance]. To the excellent spirit that is in thee, to the guidance and the good-will of Him who dwelt in the bush, I leave you. If there is any error in your conduct on this occasion, it leans so to the side of virtue that I dare not combat it. One piece of advice I give you: keep very short accounts, and send your mistress the money you intend to pay, quarterly. If it should at any time be inconvenient to you to continue this allowance, be sure to have your books regular, that you may have a fair debtor and creditor account to show. Another thing: do not immediately remove your family from this place, which I dare say you are disposed to do. Remember, it is large. Try a year at least; and when you *do* remove them, let them come to you in all the decency of humble life; and hold out no golden prospects to unsettle their minds or their principles. It is not every mind can stand a sudden reverse. The piety of your

father and mother is unquestionable ; and as they are my children, their safe walk is a part of my happiness : so you see I am selfish after all.'

*Michael.* I have done wisely, Sir, I think, in one thing ; I never have leaned to my own understanding. You have been the guide of my youth.

*Mr. Walker.* My good lad, Michael Kemp, this is a very common error. If you had had no better guide than George Walker, you would not have been so correct as you are. And oh ! [said he, joining his reverend hands together,] may the good Spirit which hath begun the good work in your soul, make it perfect, strengthen, stablish, settle you ! You may perhaps think I am too particular in casting from me your approbation and your confidence : but ministers are men, and are exposed to very great temptations ; more especially if they are the means of doing any good in their parishes. They are surrounded by grateful and loving children, who over-rate their characters, and spoil what they admire. They set up a human creature like themselves, they sit in his shadow till they lose sight of the sun. Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but God only can give the increase.

Michael rose to depart. 'Pull the bell ; Mrs. Walker will like to say good evening.'

She came at her husband's summons : 'Well, Mr. Kemp ; we get a peep, but it is *but* a peep of you. I could have wished, if it were right to wish

any thing, that we had you here, instead of 20 miles distant.'

'Oh! we shall go and visit him some day,' said Mr. Walker, looking kindly at him, 'if we live. I should like to see this Brow farm, and to look at my old friend Lascelles, his nice wife, and his pretty children; and I should like to drop a tear at the grave of poor Moss, who has journeyed so happily through pain and sorrow, and who is seated in the presence of Him who removed the sting of death.—Ah! Edmund, are you come to see your old friend, the blackberry-gatherer?'

This fine youth, with a countenance full of the kindest expression, offered Michael his hand. 'How Master Edmund is grown, Sir!' 'Yes; he has left me in the valley:' and, with expressions full of benevolence and esteem from Mr. and Mrs. Walker, and their son, he departed.

It was late, and he would not disturb his family that evening. And Mrs. Potter, who knew every horse that came into the village, and envied every penny that went beside her, had fished out that Michael was gone to the Rectory; that he was dressed in a suit of superfine black cloth; that he had on a new pair of gloves; and, please ye, fine crape in his hat: that his old master, Moss, was dead, and had left him a power of money; and that he was got so proud he could not visit his poor old father and mother; that he was so grand he could not go to any body but

heads of the place. 'This is gratitude : he must go to the Fountain, instead of the Lion. I wonder what the landlady of the Fountain ever gave him or his. This comes of *his* religion !'

Mrs. Potter's ill-nature flew. Joe brought it home, just as they were going to bed. 'Nonsense, boy !' said his father. 'I wish you would not go gossiping with that boy at the Lion, Joe,' said his mother. Joe held down his conscious head, and the family went to repose.

Before six next morning, Michael was at his father's door : the windows were open, Jane was lighting the fire, his father buttoning his gaiters, and Joe just opening the hatch to go to his labour at the nurseryman's. He returned : 'Here is Michael, just as Mrs. Potter said !' '*Just as Mrs. Potter said*, stupid boy ! What *can* that woman know of our Michael ?'

Kemp knew his boy too well to suspect him for an instant ; and poor Joe feared his father still thought him a foolish son.

Michael patted his head, saying, 'Dearest boy, I do not wonder Mrs. Potter thought it odd ; but I shall give my father good reasons.'

Elizabeth Kemp was soon down ; she was not quite so confiding as her husband, and could not help saying, 'Michael, I am sorry thy father's house is not good enough for thee.' 'Wife, wife !' said Joseph Kemp, in a tone which she well understood : it was never used but when he was

displeased ; seriously displeased. Michael could only kiss her cheek, and say, ‘ Have patience, mother ; could we breakfast alone this morning ? ’

Elizabeth Kemp looked at him : ‘ Is any thing the matter, my boy ? In deep mourning ! How is my Fanny ? ’ ‘ Quite well, mother : if we could be alone— ’ ‘ Yes, my dear boy. ’

Jane hustled the children up stairs ; Joe took his bit in his pocket. ‘ Good bye, Michael ; I shall see you again at dinner. ’ ‘ No, my dear boy, I must be at home to-night. ’ The father and mother both stared, but said nothing.

Once alone, Michael began ; stated all the reader has been made acquainted with, only concealing Mr. Walker’s advice as respected themselves ; and closed with saying, ‘ I hope I shall be able to be of some use to you, my dear father ; and if you will spare Joe to me, I will do what I can for him. ’

*Mr. Kemp.* I do not think we ought to let him go till Michaelmas next. His master has had him all the dead weather, and it would not be decent and Christian-like to take him away now his busy time is coming.

*Michael.* Very true ; and it will suit me better to have him when I am settled.

It was with some regret they parted, though there was a promise, that should a gracious Providence bless them with life and health, they would meet ere the summer should pass by.

Michael reached the Brow in safety, and in the evening he requested a moment's converse with Mrs. Finch. He told her his resolution to pay her 100*l.* per annum, at four quarterly payments of 25*l.* each; and that should he not succeed in business, he should not fail, he hoped, to give her timely notice.

She was extremely affected by his noble resolution, and said, 'She had no doubt but he would prosper: he was so good.' Michael shook his head; and Mrs. Finch said, 'It is always the case, the best people think least of themselves. As soon as my poor dear brother was so perfect that nobody could mend him, he called himself a miserable sinner.'

On Sunday morning the whole of the Brow family appeared at church in respectable mourning, and with decency, down to the meanest domestic; such is the force of good regulations in a family. Many were the comments of the young ladies of the village on the improvement in Michael's looks; and many were the flutterings of their vanity on the idea of a new farmer, and a young farmer, at the Brow.

One cannot help pitying the misguided conduct of parents and relations on such occasions as these. 'He will make a good husband, I've no doubt,' said the mother of one. 'He has kept his father off the parish; at least, that's what I hears,' said another.

But to return to a better subject. Mr. Lascelles chose for his text Paul's defence: '*I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*' It would be too long for our purpose to give the whole of the sermon; a short extract may suffice:

'To the world the Christian appears as a madman: what say the Scriptures? 'We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. Now is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!' This will be the reflection of every mind at the close of such a life as that of the departed. How often have I heard the people of this village wondering what was come to our risen friend! This was come to him: his eyes were opened, he beheld himself a sinner; he sat at the feet of his Saviour; he opened his neglected Bible; he gave willingly to the poor; every eye looked on him with gratitude, and every tongue blessed him. This was come to him: the hardness of his heart was melted; his love to God and his love to man flowed in a fertilizing stream through the latter years of his mortal existence. Peace was in his bosom; that peace which a trifling world cannot understand; and it appeared in every action to the glory of *Him* who had called him from darkness to light, and raised him from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Man may be charmed with the science of poetry, painting, or music; but if,

warmed by the prospect of bliss, immortal bliss, he should speak with rapture of the joys of Heaven, he is mad! If he regulates his life, he is a Methodist. If he cannot mix with profane people, he is dull and insipid; he sets up for a saint, &c. And is this all? Is this all the persecution we have to bear? It is all. I do not say it would be all, did not law restrain. Deep bitterness and malignity appear in these low murmurings; but not a hair of your head shall perish. He who careth for the sparrows, He who rideth in the whirlwind, He who is in the still small voice, He shall guide you with his counsel, and afterward receive you to glory. 'What is truth?' said Pilate. There is no truth in the world and its maxims. What is soberness? The world's cup is full of intoxications. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.' Get thee to thy chamber, shut to thy door; pray unto Him that seeth in secret, He shall reward thee openly.'

Mrs. Finch thought the sermon was preached at *her*. It might appear so, but it was not the case. Mr. Lascelles was too wise to make any direct applications in his sermon; but he spared no sin and folly because he was surrounded by sin and folly. Whatever conscience dictated him, that he touched; and, like an able surgeon walking through his hospital, looked carefully into all the varieties of disease, and applied, as necessity required, the knife, the caustic, or the emollient;

and, where lethargy prevailed, roused his patients with pungent applications.

Mrs. Finch could not help telling Michael, when she returned to the house, what had been her feelings during the sermon; and remarked, that she did not think Mr. Lascelles would have pointed her out so publicly.

Michael assured her it was what had been said of his master by many others long before he was ill, and that he thought Mr. Lascelles' motive in clearing that point was, the fear that such a charge as madness might render his example less striking. 'And,' said Michael, 'certainly my poor dear master did shine so after he became a Christian, that his memory may be as useful as his example.' Mrs. Finch very gravely replied, that her brother was *always* a good Christian; he always kept his church, I never knew him swear, he never got drunk. Michael was silent: he felt that he had gone too far; that respect became him.

As Michael was to set off the next morning by six, he went down to Mr. Lascelles, who permitted any of his parishioners who wished it to join his family worship. He was just in time, and with great pleasure perceived James Brown among the family servants. Mr. Lascelles had thrown out a portico to the front-door, not to add beauty to the house, but to enlarge the hall. It was carried out the whole width, and accommodated the people greatly on Sunday evenings. A good lamp lit the

hall ; and it was pleasing to observe the orderly arrangement of this little group : the benevolent countenance of the good pastor, as he familiarly conversed on these best of subjects with his cleanly village children, and the reverent attention of the elder branches of his audience, while he affectionately addressed them on the maturer duties and later fruits of Christian life ; while he called on them to observe, from their own experience, how faithful God was to his promises.

When the little party broke up, Michael waited, and respectfully drew near the table where Mr. Lascelles was sitting.

*Michael.* I returned last evening, Sir, from P——. Mr. Walker sent you his affectionate regards.

Mr. Lascelles had risen from his seat, had drawn the arm of his wife within his own, and turning to her, said, ‘My love, this is the young man of whom you have heard me speak, and to whom the excellent Farmer Moss has left the Brow Farm.’

Mrs. Lascelles’ countenance wore a smile of kindness.

*Mr. Lascelles.* But you must not stand here, my love, for the wind blows cold. Go, my little girls. Mr. Kemp, walk in for a little.

Michael bowed, and stepped across the hall to James. ‘I am very glad to see you, James : stop for me a little ; I should like to walk home with

you.' James said, he certainly would; and Michael hastened to the parlour door, which was left open for him.

Mr. Lascelles put a chair, and begged him to be seated; walked up to him, and half bending, inquired how he had settled about the Brow. Michael related his plan. Mr. Lascelles said, 'I hope you have not burthened yourself; the expenses of that farm are great: its high situation and its variety of surface render it very fatiguing to the horses.'

*Michael.* Yes, Sir; I know it all; but—

*Mr. Lascelles.* Well, young man; you have acted as a Christian ought to act, and I shall say no more.

Michael rose, took leave, and found James waiting for him just within the portico. It was a clear light evening, though cold; and as they bent their way to Westrip's, James began to unfold his mind to Michael.

*James.* I little thought I should ever be of your mind; but I have suffered a good deal since I saw you last, Michael. I suppose you have heard by the papers that Robert and that old gipsy grandfather are both gone to Botany-Bay: and I suppose you know that Mrs. Priddel is dying of the dropsy; and that nobody takes any heed to Cicely Jones, for she's a noted bad character. I'm sure I do wonder, so much as I knew about 'em all, as ever Mr. Lascelles should a taken me

into his service. I think I'm not worthy to clean any body's shoes; and if ever I should get to Heaven, I think I should be the worst as ever did get there. If you knew all the wicked things as com'd into my head, I think you would be afraid to walk with me when the moon goes under a cloud.

*Michael.* Do you give way to wicked thoughts? do you indulge them?

*James.* No, no! they are my torment. I never give way to them: but I know I deserve to suffer, and I *shall* suffer; for I always hated religion; and I'm eating of the fruits o' my own ways, and I heard my uncle say once as I should.

Michael had for some time been wavering in his own mind what reply to make to all this. He well knew the lightness of Jem's nature, and how easy it was to comfort him in general; and was not at all sorry to find the work in his mind a deep one. As they drew near Westrip's cottage, Michael thought he would say thus much to him: 'If God had not purposes of mercy for you, He would not thus show you the evil of your own heart. I have read the remark somewhere, 'God never opens those wounds which he does not mean to heal:'' and his finger was on the latch of Westrip's door.

The old man was very glad to see Michael. All his kindness for so many years to his nephew had made a deep impression on the honest man's

heart; and when he saw him, it was with that sort of veneration with which we look upon a being eminently good.

He could only press the hand of the uncle and the nephew, and run home. Mrs. Finch had indeed wondered at the length of his stay. He told her where he had been and with whom, for it was one part of his character to have no mystery.

*Mrs. Finch.* We must settle something, Mr. Kemp. I desired William not to go to bed till you came in, that you might leave orders.

Michael felt the awkwardness of his new situation, and would gladly have slept through the coming month of his existence; but as Mrs. Finch said, 'Something must be done,' he said, 'I'll step out, Ma'am, and speak to William.'

William was waiting by the kitchen fire. He rose and said, 'I feels comical, like, Sir; I be sorry for them as is gone, and I be glad for them as is come. It sha'n't be my fault, Master Kemp, if you don't prosper. I sha'n't spare myself, I do assure ye; for I hopes as ye don't mean to turn me off.'

*Michael.* No, indeed, William; I have too good an opinion of you to wish to part with you.

*William.* What, I suppose you have forgotten the time as you let me in in the night?

*Michael.* No, William; I remember it very well; and I'm glad *you* remember it.

*William.* You won't catch me at that again, Master ; I likes quiet sleep too well.

*Michael.* I must leave you in trust here, William : perhaps you could get Westrip and his wife to stay here till I return ; and I must fix the time too. [He stepped back to Mrs. Finch.] Would it be convenient to you, Madam, to spare me a fortnight ?

*Mrs. Finch.* If I studied my own convenience, Mr. Kemp, I should not spare you at all : I have known so little care since you have been with me, that I never expect such tranquillity again. But we must not waste time. In a fortnight then—

When Miss Jemima went out of the room, Michael thought it right to mention to his mistress what had passed about Stephen, and to say he thought a separation necessary.

*Mrs. Finch.* Oh ! I think you had better take Stephen with you ; for as for my Jemima, she is so fond of Fanny, that, in the present state of her mind, to take Fanny away would be really cruel : and, to say the truth, Fanny is a sweet creature, and it would go hard with me to part with her just now. I can but admire Mr. Stephen's good taste, though I think your sister might do better. It's an honest family, but poor ; and I think many a young farmer would be glad of such a wife as Fanny.

*Michael.* No, Madam ; I don't think any good

can come from going out of one's station. I had rather see my sister the wife of the worthy Stephen than of any man I know.

I must now tell the reader what passed in Mrs. Finch's mind: 'So, then, Jemima will never be asked to the Brow farm.' This thought, this passing thought, was never known to any one but the author, and is committed in perfect confidence to the reader.

The business of life, though necessary to be performed, and all its minor duties, though forming a part in the great whole, make no figure in description: but there is one part of this fortnight it may be useful to record.

Michael felt that in the world's eye this change of circumstances seemed highly advantageous; but to him, who had never known want, and whose present situation was so tranquil, so respectable, it was a change merely external as to comfort; and he felt the new and responsible duties of a sole master. The guidance of a large concern required wisdom beyond his own; and perhaps some extracts from his little morocco pocket-book may give the reader the best idea of Michael's view of his own station:

'January 12. My dear master gone to glory. 'Let me die the death of the righteous.'—January 18. The mortal remains committed to the ground. 'Sown in weakness, raised in power.'—My master has left me considerable property. 'Who am I,

and what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto !'—I must talk to Mr. Lascelles. I must go to Mr. Walker. Above all, I must get me to my knees. O Lord, forsake me not now, in this time of my prosperity. Suffer not riches, business, and the cares of this world, to shorten my intercourse with Thee ! Let me not be satisfied with broken cisterns ; let me only drink from them with satisfaction when presented by thy hand. If thy presence go not with me, suffer me not to go thither.—Sunday evening. Heard Mr. Lascelles : a most striking sermon : 'I am not mad,' &c. Went in the evening to the Rectory. One observation he made in addressing the little children, bending his eye towards their watchful countenances : 'When ye pray, my little ones, ask for just what ye want. A little form is very good to fix your minds ; but be sure to ask for something before you rise from your knees, something that you feel you want.' In addressing the elders, he said, 'Do not go before Providence. We are too apt, even with the best intentions, to meddle too much with God's works. Wait. Learn his will, as circumstances arise. Search the Scriptures : see what your duty is in such a case. 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word.' O may I thus cleanse my ways !

It had been Michael's custom to pray twice each day ; and he usually read a little of the

Scriptures at noon. He now felt he wanted clearer light: he seemed putting to sea alone; and he felt convinced that the vessel must sink if the Saviour were not in it. His memorandum on Tuesday evening runs thus:

‘My poor Fanny has greatly affected me: ‘Will you leave me, my dear brother?’ Lord, undertake for me; for I know not what to do!—Thursday eve: I have written to my father about Fanny. Stephen is hardly willing to go with me; but upon this subject I am resolved; I see, I know it to be right!—Saturday evening: Lord, lead me rightly! I think Fanny’s mind something softened towards her stay here. The friendship of her mistress, the kindness of Miss Jemima—how true is that Scripture, godliness is profitable for the life that now is!—Thursday morning: The time draws on: a few days more, and I must quit this scene, where I have received so much kindness; where every creature under the roof hath shewn me respect and love. Lord, reward them sevenfold into their bosom! Be gracious unto me according to the multitude of thy mercies!—Saturday evening: How hast Thou made all that I dreaded to pass away as a dream! My mistress is more than satisfied with my conduct: my sister is content to stay: Stephen makes no further objection. It is thy doing, O Lord! Thou hast the hearts of all in thy hands! And now, as I must soon quit this

scene, may thy guidance mark my way ! As for me and my house, may we serve the Lord !'

On the Sunday afternoon Michael took his beloved sister into the garden : ' And now, my precious Fanny, do not you be cast down : remember that God is nigh thee. I think it is good for thee, Fanny, to be obliged to take counsel of the Lord. You often come to me with ' What shall I do now, brother ? What ought I to say now, brother ? ' You see, my precious Fanny, your heavenly Father will have you come to himself : and there must be no one between you and your God.'

Miss Jemima just then crossed the path ; and Michael said, ' I am just speaking to my sister, Madam ; and if you would add to all the favours you have shown me since I have been in your mother's house, I would request that you would press upon my dear sister not to let her nice Bible lie unopened.—Fanny, those neat gilded leaves have often made my heart ache !'

Fanny coloured ; for she knew the charge was true : her Bible had been too little read. Jemima, with that modesty and discretion which had ever distinguished her, said, ' I hope, Mr. Kemp, your good advice will be useful to us both.'

Monday morning came ; and, without the indulgence of one farewell to any creature at the Valley, except the following short letter to his mistress, Michael and Stephen set off at the dawn.

Perhaps the reader may excuse the intrusion of this letter; it will serve to fill up the chasm between the Valley and the Brow, for neither Stephen nor Michael were much disposed to speak :

‘ Madam,—Accept in few words my warm gratitude for all your goodness to me. I have left the account sealed in the wainscot desk, with an inventory of the state of the cattle, the stock of all kinds, farming implements not excepted; where repairs are wanting, and what you had better sell. I hope I have been clear, and that what you have put under my hand has been taken care of. If at any time my coming to you could be of any service; if you would like your son to spend a little time with me for experience and instruction in farming; remember, your poor servant is still your servant. God bless you, Madam! God bless your house! May your goodness to me be rewarded into your own bosom! prays your humble servant,

‘MICHAEL KEMP.’

## CHAPTER VII.

IMPROVING CHARACTER OF STEPHEN.—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF CICELY JONES.—A GLANCE AT THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE BROW FARM AND AT THE VALLEY.—STEPHEN GOES ON A VISIT TO HIS FRIENDS.—HIS ATTACHMENT TO FANNY KEMP RECEIVES THE SANCTION OF MICHAEL.—INTERVIEW BETWEEN STEPHEN AND FANNY.—MICHAEL FITS UP THE MILL FOR THEIR RESIDENCE.—TABLET TO THE MEMORY OF FARMER MOSS.—MICHAEL BRINGS FANNY TO THE BROW FARM.

DR. JOHNSON says very truly, that the ‘busy rarely die of grief.’ Our two good young men found much to do in their new abode; and though they remembered Fanny, and missed her sadly, yet every day’s employment brought its weariness, and weariness brought repose; and repose calmed the troubled bosom; and time soothed the separation. When they could not see, they thought of, their friends: the postman rose in importance; and the reader will not be surprised to hear that Stephen was uneasy if his master did not get a letter at the time expected. But I am happy to inform them that this young man was learning gradually and willingly the lesson of submission. He was introduced to Mr. Lascelles, who was extremely struck, first with his person, and lastly with the unfolding of his Christian temper, in his

humble deportment, and active steady walk in the path of daily duty. And in preaching one Sunday on 'Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!' after warning his Christian hearers to pray constantly and fervently, 'Set a watch before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips;' in his usual animated way, he said, 'But it is not only the fire of anger which a little spark kindleth: I have seen the fire of love to God, at first confined to a very humble bosom, gradually caught by those with whom it dwelt; spreading wider and wider; appearing in acts of kindness, in steady uprightness, in much patience, in self-knowledge, in love of souls, seasoning the conversation! O that you who fear the Lord would speak often one to another. A book of remembrance is kept. Perhaps you will say, 'I am afraid of hypocrisy.' But wherefore should it be hypocrisy to speak of the lovingkindness of the Lord? to speak of those hopes which form the best part of our existence? Some modest Christian soul may be complaining in himself, 'Would that I could speak of God!' If such there are in this congregation, let their prayer be, 'Open Thou my mouth, that I may shew forth thy praise!''

Thus he warned his hearers from week to week: thus he counselled. 'He was a burning and a shining light.' The fire which illuminated his soul was a light upon a hill.

I shall not weary the reader with the malignity

of many in his neighbourhood: how many, who could not imitate, laughed at him; how some, who thought drunkenness delight, despised his sobriety; how others, who hated his religion, fancied dulness in his dignity, and hypocrisy in his smile. It was a fire that blazed for a short season; but, augmented by no opposition save the holy life of him whom they persecuted, it went out of itself, and they were constrained openly to venerate the man whom secretly they could not endure. They could not ridicule him; for he was above it. They could not censure; he walked too correctly; and all they could say was, that he was too strict, and, with the same breath, that he was too lax: that, if you believed, you might do what you liked. In short, Envy died a miserable death: she was starved.

In the course of the summer, they had many meetings with James Brown, whose change was evident to every eye; whose gay face became too grave to do credit to the cause of God, and was more like to injure it than to advance it. 'Poor Jem Brown!' said one. 'Poor Jem Brown!' exclaimed another.

Old Westrip being addressed by one in the following manner, made a reply which I think did him credit: 'Your nephew looks mighty sad, Mr. Westrip; I suppose he's turned religious.'

*Westrip.* I wish he may turn religious.

'Why does he look so dull, Mr. Westrip?'

*Westrip.* I'll tell ye : he's gone a wandering out of the road ; he has lost his shepherd ; but he's turned back and looking after him. He's been eating husks with the swine, and he's turning to his father's house ; he's not got there yet ; the walk is long, and he's dirty, Sir.

‘What do you mean?’

‘I mean as the sin of his youth sticks close. I mean as he can't shake off the remembrance of his bad company, bad words, bad actions ; and he not only sorrows for himself, but for you, and for many more who are going to —, who are *not* going to Heaven,’ said Westrip ; who had very nearly said a very plain thing, till he remembered Mr. Lascelles had said, ‘no man was ever *scolded* into Christianity.’

The person to whom this was spoken, said, Westrip was a very uncharitable man ; and next day the wife attacked him : ‘So, Mr. Clerk, we are all going to the D—— together?’ ‘I pray ye may not,’ said the impenetrable Westrip, and walked quietly on, with his hands behind him ; and next day they found all their onions gone, and their nice flowers trampled down. ‘The works of their father they will do,’ said the poor old man, as they put their nice little garden in order.

On James this event had a painful effect. ‘Wherever I go I bring trouble : I'll go to master, and tell him as I have a mind to go away out of the country.’

The discourse between James and his master was long and effectual. One observation seemed written on his heart : ‘ this *gloom* is not religion : ’tis a temptation of the Evil One. ‘ Son, be of *good cheer* ; thy sins are forgiven thee ! ’

It is not in my pen to help the reader to form any idea of the tone and manner of this excellent man at this moment ; but I *can* feel it, and Jem *felt* it. He was lighter : strength was given him to believe *that* Scripture, and to *apply* it. I do not say he never walked heavily, but never *so* heavily. ‘ Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief ! ’ was in his heart many times : but he saw the evil of a gloomy countenance ; he was careful that those who felt light under the burthen of sin should not say *holiness* was misery, and religion’s ways were ways of wretchedness. He took care not to bewilder their ignorant minds, and bring an evil report on the good land they had not as yet visited. He became eminently good ; he was the comfort of his kind uncle ; and when Westrip would sometimes speak of the malignity of the irreligious, Jem’s reply was, ‘ Uncle, never let us mention them but upon our knees.’

About this time Cicely Jones was sent in a sad state of health from the parish of — to Doverdale. Jem was determined to visit her, and he took his aunt with him. She was lodged with a very strict church-going person, whose prayer-book and spectacles, wrapped in a Sunday pocket-

handkerchief, in a clean paper box, went into their weekly apartment, and made no small portion of her Sunday devotion.

When James and his aunt reached the cottage, Mrs. Sturges was nailing up some pretty shoots of her late-blowing honeysuckles, and her monthly rose; and made a dead stand at her open door, with a look intended to forbid their entrance; but James did not regard it. 'Is Cicely Jones here, Mrs. Sturges?' 'Yes, James Brown: but she does not see company; she is very ill.' James and his aunt slipped by. The poor creature was seated by the fire, in the last stage of a consumption. Her hollow eyes wandered over James's features; and when she recollected him, she seemed to shudder, and closed them again. Dame Westrip took her hand: 'Could ye take any thing?' 'No—no!' and she closed her eyes again. They left her.

Mr. Lascelles went, as soon as he heard of it, and offered every assistance; but it was too late. Death had seized his prey; and it might be said of Cicely Jones, that her lamp was put out in obscure darkness!

Michael was not without difficulties in his new situation. Every thing without doors prospered, but his domestic management was uncomfortable. He and Stephen both felt it. He reflected within himself, 'If I was even to ask my mother to come for a time, the children would suffer, and I could

not be happy to put them to inconvenience at home. The giddiness of those I have here interferes with our comfort. Something must be done.'

He took a walk down to Westrip's, to consult the good old woman. She said, 'Sir, if you could get a steady body like me to be about—'

Michael smiled. 'Why such a body as you would just suit me, Mrs. Westrip.' 'Sir, I was thinking there's one of Mr. Lascelles' spinning-women as can't stand out-door business: she is come to decay, like; seen better days; tender, not old. Will you try her, Sir? She is not more than fifty-five. When she was in her prosperity, there was not a genteeler body, nor a neater: and if you'd spend a pound or two in dressing her, I'm sure I'd help to make her clothes; and I think she'd suit well. And then [lowering her tone] she's so religious she would not have a bit of waste where she was. And then she's so clean—'

Dame Westrip's character of this good woman determined Michael. She was sent for. Her appearance justified the character that had been given. She was very thin; a meek countenance, which seemed to say, 'All is right that my heavenly Father provides:' and when she heard the proposal to live with the good young farmer at the Brow, her upcast eye seemed to say, 'Lord, it is thy doing!' and then looking down on her coarse and homely dress, 'I ben't hardly fit to

come into your house.' 'Oh, Betty Smith! Mr. Kemp will take care of that for you.'

The poor old woman could say nothing. She was overcome; and Michael asked her when it would suit her to take up her abode with him? 'When, Sir, would it please you to have me?' 'Why, Betty Smith,' said Mrs. Westrip, 'it would take us some time to get ready.'

The honest creature stood between Michael and Dame Westrip, ready to obey orders, without a will or a wish. Michael's heart and Betty's were occupied much in the same manner. He thought God had sent him a servant, while she thought God had provided her a place. The reader will not be surprised to hear that such a hiring prospered. Betty became all that Michael wanted. She had but one defect in his eye; she could not bear to act without his orders, and in-door orders were to Michael a complete worry. 'You know I shall be pleased, Betty Smith; I wish you would not tease me:' and Betty would go out of the room smiling, and yet half vexed, 'How can one tell what master will like when he never will say?'

Having settled this good young man's domestic affairs comfortably, we must take a view of his religious order. The boys about his farm had always some time in the week allowed for play, that they might never be tempted to break the Sabbath. Mr. Walker had been in the habit of explaining the Commandments so familiarly, that Michael

perfectly remembered the exercises of his youth, and what had profited himself, he wisely thought might profit them. His morning and evening prayers were short, but expressive; and there is reason to think that the affectionate interest these prayers expressed for the salvation of those under his roof, touched the hearts of many of his servants: as for William, he thought his master, though to be sure not quite perfect, yet pretty nigh to 't; and when, as Michael would sometimes say, 'If I live I will do this or that,' William would constantly say, 'Ah! master, don't you talk of dying, you can't be spared; nobody in this village can spare you, master.' He had so frequently said this, that Michael thought himself wrong in permitting it to pass; and he thus addressed him: 'William, the quiet in which you live with me deceives you; and you judge, because I do not make my family unhappy, that I am perfect. The internal struggles of my mind with sin convince me that perfection is only in God. Nevertheless, let us strive to walk uprightly, though on this side Jordan is not our rest. I can never feel internal peace when I look from Him who redeemed me: with my eye *there*, on his cross, all is safe, all is peace. 'It is finished;' 'My grace is sufficient for thee;' 'Go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee;' 'Look unto me, and be ye saved:' these are my supports. I am a poor creature: I am fond of a good name. If

you love me, and I believe you do, join not the enemies of my soul in exalting me in my own sight. If you speak, William, of my not being spared, remember, God can raise up instruments for his own purposes. When it best pleases Him, He is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham; and as for me, William, I repeat it, if you really love me, and wish to keep me, do not provoke the Lord by setting up a man for your idol. Trust not in man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of? God has been wonderfully gracious unto me, William; and I count it among my highest privileges to be surrounded by loving spirits, and that for the most part my servants are God's servants: but, oh! my faithful servant, pray for me. I have so few trials at present, and it is so much the nature of ungrateful man to forget God in prosperity, that it is a wise and suitable petition, 'In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us.' In times of our adversity we get us to our Lord right humbly; *but* when we sail with summer breezes, upon a smooth sea, how flattering to the evil of our hearts is the prosperous gale!

The reader may now, probably, have no objection to visit the Valley for a short time, and to learn how Fanny had borne the absence of her brother. She became increasingly useful; and Jemima was so very fond of her, that they fre-

quently sat together (in fine weather) to their work in the garden ; and it was in these seasons of industry and rural quiet that Jemima read Mr. Newton's *Omicron* and *Cardiphonia*, explaining, as she went along, all the parts she thought Fanny would not understand. These books were read and read again ; and Jemima ventured one day to ask her mother if she should read some very nice letters to her. She chose those three : *Grace in the Blade*, *Grace in the Ear*, &c. Mrs. Finch was very much struck with them ; but it is not very easy for persons of her character to give up old opinions, especially when they come from persons younger than themselves, and from suspected persons ; for she really thought Jemima had gotten *little good* attending her uncle at the Brow ; and though there was nothing she could censure, she thought her too precise, and too particular. However, the book was read, and those three letters again and again ; and it was lent to Mr. Cooper, who, when he opened the volume, said, ' Yes, yes ; I remember this man : he was one of the wickedest people that ever lived. Very extraordinary life, that ! I forget how many years he preached in London, at a church in Lombard-street. It is an odd thing, he was very much respected by his Bishop.' Two texts fastened on the mind of Mr. C. while he was talking : ' Ye must be born again ;'

and 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children,' &c. Mr. C. could not get them out of his head. He had never thought much of them before; and what connection they could have with Newton, of whom he was speaking, he could not conjecture. 'The anatomy of the human mind is as wonderful as that of the body!' said he, in closing the book.

The year rolled round. Peace and prosperity seemed settled at the Brow and at the Valley. But Stephen's Paradise was imperfect; he wanted his Eve. He had been very honourable; he had not even spoken to Michael on the subject till the time was past.

As they were together one evening, in that twilight which gives courage to speak on subjects we could not otherwise touch, Michael admiring a rich sunset, with his back to a very good fire; Stephen began:

'I was thinking, Sir—'

Michael made no reply.—Stephen began again.

'I was thinking, perhaps you could spare me for a day or two: I should like to go and see my father and mother.'

Michael unclasped his hands; put one upon Stephen's shoulder, and with that Christian frankness which distinguished him, said, 'You shall go, Stephen; and you shall see my sister too; and the Lord prosper you!'

There was a silence of some minutes; when Stephen, rising, said, 'Your goodness, Sir, to me is great indeed!'

'Not at all, Stephen; I am very sensible of your worth. In committing Fanny to your care, I do myself a pleasure.'

Stephen's departure was fixed for the following Friday; the day after Christmas Day.

It is an old road: we will not talk about it. Stephen really did not know how he passed the mile-stones. The journey seemed long, and yet his mind was so busy that he scarce remembered one object on the road: but the words of Michael, 'The Lord prosper you!' had settled in his bosom like a prophecy; and he felt as though the Lord *would* prosper him.

Williamson was the first object he saw when he arrived at the Valley.

'Ste—Ste—Stephen, thee be 'st grown; why, thee art a stout man! What art come for, Steph?'

This was an unfortunate question. At length, Williamson, scratching his head, said, 'I hope Master Kemp's well?'

Stephen, very glad of this turn to the conversation, assured Williamson that his master was *quite* well; and greatly enlarged upon the comforts of the Brow, to prevent the recurrence of 'what he was come for.'

The news soon ran through the Valley farm that Stephen was come from the Brow; and

Fanny threw down her work, and ran out : ‘ Oh ! Mr. Stephen, how is my dear brother ? ’ ‘ Quite well, and sends his love. ’

Stephen had puzzled as he rode along ; and at last he settled, if it held fair, that he would ask Fanny to walk with him to the Level-Bit, as he had something to tell her from her brother. Fanny ran in again to her mistress, and told her Stephen’s request, and added, ‘ I can’t think what it is, Ma’am ; I hope nothing’s the matter at P——. ’ ‘ I hope not, child,’ said Mrs. Finch : ‘ put on your cloak directly, and go with him. ’

In the mean time she stepped into the great kitchen to see Stephen, and to question him. As she went along, the thought crossed her mind of what Michael had confided to her at the time of her brother’s death.

Mrs. Finch was a good-natured woman, and there was no intricacy in her character. She took no pleasure in puzzling and confounding people ; so she simply contented herself with saying, ‘ I hope all is well, Stephen. ’ ‘ Yes, Madam. ’ ‘ You have something to say to Fanny ? ’ ‘ Yes, Madam. ’ ‘ Have you seen James, my son ? ’ ‘ No, Madam : I hope he is well ; and Miss Jemima ? ’ ‘ He is gone skating somewhere. ’

The walkers set out ; and as in the opinion of the writer these scenes should be entirely private, it is hoped the reader will be satisfied with hearing that Stephen declared himself ; that Fanny was

*honestly* surprised ; and that, before Stephen had his thumb on the latch of the Level-Bit, his future prospects were settled under the illuminations of hope.

‘ Oh ! ’ said Ellen, ‘ here is our Stephen and Fanny ! ’ The mother slipped down stairs to welcome the pride of her heart, and her dear Fanny. ‘ Sit down, my dear children ; sit down. ’ The word had escaped her ; she did not attempt to mend it.

It was a pleasant group just then : Frank ran in with his little hands red with the cold. He looked astonished when he saw Fanny, and still more at Stephen ; and was just making his way to climb Fanny’s knee, when the mother, vexed at the interruption, said, ‘ Child, why dostn’t thee get out to play ? ’ ‘ O mother ! ’ said young Ellen, ‘ why he is stiff with the cold ! ’ and she took him from Fanny, and began to rub his little feet and hands.

‘ And how long are ye to ’bide with us, Stephen ? ’ said his mother. ‘ Till Tuesday morning. ’ ‘ Ellen, you shall go down to the Valley, and beg Mrs. Finch to spare Fanny to spend Sunday with us. Your father will be at home that day. ’

*Stephen.* [Thoughtfully.] True, mother ; she can come with me from church.

Meredith met his son with a father’s pleasure, and Stephen looked on his family with but one

abatement. Lovely in their persons, admirable in their habits and characters, there was an air of self-satisfaction in all they did and said: not a wish from the heart beyond this world! What to say he knew not; yet something *ought* to be said.

His mind was easy as to Fanny; for on the road she had spoken of her brother's excellent principles, and had assured Stephen that his having chosen the good way was her principal inducement to accept him.

Stephen and his father walked together to the church; for it was one of Ellen Meredith's bad habits to stay at home every Sunday morning, after dressing all her children, to cook the Sunday's dinner. This she did with her usual neatness; and few persons, who have servants to do every thing for them, head their table more delicately clean than Ellen Meredith, after performing every office of the kitchen. But the enemy of mankind is in nothing more subtle than in his temptations; and as he tempts some with pride, some with sloth, so he tempted Ellen Meredith with cleanliness. She would have gone to church, but she must get her husband's bit of dinner. Ellen might have remained sometimes, but she loved to see her children go out clean on Sunday morning. She found a clean excuse for every thing; and if cleanliness was not godliness, it was next to it. Stephen

thought that Scripture suited his mother, 'This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.'

As Stephen and his father walked together to the church, and the six children before them, Ellen carrying her pet brother, he said, 'I should be perfectly comfortable this morning, but for one thing, my dear father: it makes me quite unhappy to see my dear mother labouring every day and Sunday only for this world.'

'Somebody must stay at home, you know, Stephen,' said his father: 'it is a *hard* thing if I can't have a bit of hot dinner on a Sunday.'

'We have always cold meat at the Brow,' said Stephen.

'True, Stephen; but you have a hot dinner every day: that is what your poor father never has.'

Stephen remained silent: he had much feeling; but he thought he would say one word more, and leave it. 'Could not Ellen and Willy take *their* turns? I am sure, if I lived at home, I would. My mother *should* go out.'

The father was proud of his boy; not only of his person, but of his understanding: and Stephen's piety had given him dignity in his family. 'What our Stephen will think of it!' and 'What our Stephen will say to it!' were common expressions among them. A word in due season is good. What Stephen said made impression; and though Meredith was too fatherly to own it, his wife went

to church ever after that, taking her turn for home with her two elder children.

Excellent as Mrs. Finch's management was, and regular as was her habit of reading a prayer with her servants morning and evening, there was a coldness in her devotions: it was like a beautiful statue of Piety; it wanted breath, it wanted warmth. Stephen felt it, but he could not think what or describe how. Speaking of it to Fanny in her way home to the Valley, she replied, 'O yes, I know what you mean; but if you were to hear Miss Jemima talk! If you were to hear *her* read the prayers, when her mother is out, it is so different.'

The time flew; and very reluctantly did Stephen remember that he was to set off on Tuesday morning, though he was returning to his dear Mr. Kemp, and his pleasant duties at the Brow. He did not know that his kind master had considered all this; that he had told Mrs. Finch, if it did not inconvenience her, he should be glad to have Fanny home in March. He did not tell Stephen for whom he had fitted up the Mill-house so prettily: and Stephen thought his master was laying out a good deal of money; and he could not see the use of the new room adjoining the kitchen, and the pleasant little bedroom over it, before the windows of which waved the fine willows that hung over the stream: in short, Stephen was afraid that his kind master was going

on *rather* too fast. Had not Michael designed a kindness, Stephen had been the confidant of his plan : but it was not till Fanny was coming, that Michael said, ‘Stephen, I think it would be proper for you to remove to the Mill now.’ ‘To the Mill, Sir?’ ‘Yes, my dear fellow. I mean that house for Fanny’s dowry : I have purchased that piece of ground of my landlord. Mr. Lascelles has lent me the money to do it, and I have almost repaid him.’

Stephen could only say, ‘There never was such ——.’ He left his sentence unfinished, for Michael walked away.

Every thing was prepared for Stephen’s removal, and a fortnight before Fanny came he settled at the Mill : but he only slept there, taking his meals, as usual, at the Brow. About this time, Kemp’s father wrote him word that he thought to come and see him, as he had some things on his mind on which he wished to consult him. Michael replied, that he expected Fanny in a fortnight, and thought she would enjoy seeing him ; he therefore wished his father to defer it till her arrival.

Mr. Lascelles called in one morning, and inquired for Stephen. He was not in the way. He said, ‘Mr. Kemp, I can speak to you ; for I think you will do as well. I understand that your good Stephen is about to marry. Now I am one of the trustees of the Savings Bank ; and if he

has laid by any money, I should advise him to lodge it there, as he will be receiving immediate interest for the smallest sum.'

*Michael.* I shall be glad to mention it to him, Sir; it will be a relief to my mind, as *I have* the little he has saved; and it is one of the kindnesses I am least willing to perform—taking charge of other people's money.

*Mr. Lascelles.* It is an admirable institution; and, I hope, will quietly undermine those pests of society, the ale-houses.—Poor old Beal went to rest this morning.

*Michael.* Indeed, Sir!

*Mr. Lascelles.* He could hardly be said to die; he turned him on his side with a smile, closed his eyes, a slight flush over his pale cheek, and he was gone! And to see the stillness of the poor old woman after the event, as though she feared to disturb: her streaming eyes cast towards heaven, her aged hands clasped in each other: 'Forty-three years, Sir, we have lived together. 'Tis all over now!' and she walked out into her little back garden. Westrip's wife is gone down, and has taken the needful people with her. Jem will feel this very much. I have great difficulty in persuading that young man that the promises belong to him. How true it is that faith is the gift of God! Do you often see him here?

*Michael.* No, Sir; but when I *do*, it is always with pleasure: religion is the main thing

with him. He seems out of his element on every other subject.

*Mr. Lascelles.* James's state of mind is precisely that of a person who has great business in hand, and is always angry with every one who brings forward another subject. I remarked the other day, that as my poor gardener, who always makes an idol of the conservatory and his flower-garden, was talking with great delight to James of the beautiful show he should have this year, the expression of Jem's countenance was, 'what does all this signify? I have done with these things.' He did not speak; but the gardener saw that he turned away, and took no interest in what so greatly delighted him. I observed the disappointment in his looks, and said, 'I really think we shall be very gay this season, and I have a slight hope that I shall see a very old friend here, and shall like my garden to be in prime order.' James, who was leisurely sweeping, quickened his motions at this speech; and yet there was a mixture of surprise in his look, that I should be interested in such trifles. I took him aside, and entered into conversation with him; for I thought this an error not to be passed by. These extremes of young converts do great mischief to the cause of God. To them it is a new road; and their past lives appear with all the aggravated circumstances of rebellion against a pure and holy God, the Judge of all the earth! and their minds are more

agitated by the terrors of Sinai than composed by the breathing voice of peace in the conscience. They almost make a merit of their gravity, and think it sinful to enjoy the common blessings of Providence! Now my head gardener is a Scotchman; he has been brought up religiously, and has kept the even tenor of his way respectably. His little old Bible and his spectacles lie in one corner of our green-house, and I have more than once seen him upon his knees, when he thought no eye but that of his heavenly Father was upon him.

It should have been mentioned to the reader, that about a fortnight after Michael settled at the Brow, he went to Mr. Lascelles, and said, very respectfully, he had a great favour to ask of him. 'Speak,' said Mr. Lascelles, 'for I scarcely think you *would* ask any thing which I could deny.' 'It is, Sir, as I have resolved that as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, I think if you would do me the honour to come and speak to my family, it might impress them; they might probably remember it during their lives: and I hope God's blessing would rest on this dedication.'

Mr. Lascelles *went*, and spoke from these words: 'Give me the upper-spring blessings, and the nether-spring blessings;' and so far accommodated the text to the present circumstances, as to entreat, in the course of his prayer, that God would not only bless that house with his

presence, but that He would prosper the *labours* of it, and make it evident to every eye that '*godliness* is profitable for the life that *now is*, as well as for that which is to come.'

As soon as Michael could do it, he raised the following memorial to his master, on a neat tablet :

IN MEMORY OF  
JAMES MOSS, YEOMAN,

AGED 55 YEARS, &c.

HE WAS INTERRED NEAR THIS SPOT.

EMINENT DURING THE LAST YEARS OF HIS LIFE FOR

HIS SINCERE PIETY,

HUMBLED UNDER EVERY FAILURE IN DUTY, WARMED BY THE

LOVE OF HIS SAVIOUR,

HIS LAST HOURS WERE GILDED BY THE BRIGHT ANTICIPATION

OF THE GLORIES OF HEAVEN.

NOT A *DOUBT* SHADED HIS DYING HOURS:

HIS END WAS *PEACE*!

THIS MEMORIAL

IS PLACED HERE

BY HIS GRATEFUL SERVANT,

MICHAEL KEMP.

Many were the observations of the different inhabitants. Some thought it was a pity it was only square and plain; that angels at the corners would have looked pretty; and that if Mr. Kemp *must* put up something, it should

have been handsome. Others thought it was a reflection on the family for Mr. Kemp to stick his name at the bottom; they wondered how Mrs. Finch could like it. Some said they could not make out what he meant. They supposed he got Mr. Lascelles to write it; and, if he would stick up something, why didn't he put it inside the church instead of out? 'Oh!' said one old woman, '*that Mr. Kemp* is a very close-fisted gentleman, I'll assure ye. I happened one morning last winter to go to the Brow for a little help, I could not get any work; and says he, 'You smell too strong of gin, Mistress.' Now, to be sure, I had had a glass; for it was bitter cold weather: he shut his door; not a farthing would he give me! No, no: I never saw the colour of his money. Well! young misers are the worst of misers!'

These tales made no impression on the heart of Michael; he had done what he thought right: he left it.

On the 27th of March he set out for the Valley farm, to fetch his sister. Never was he so unwelcome: for every heart at the Valley beat kindly towards Fanny Kemp; and Jemima loved her as a sister; and Fanny's ardent spirit returned her dear young mistress's affection with more unreserved tenderness. Mrs. Finch, too, was grieved at heart to lose such a faithful, active young creature, whose very look and step spoke cheerful

happiness, and whose way was marked by useful order and willing duty. Kemp felt himself awkwardly situated: he almost feared it would be presumption to ask them to visit at the Brow; he thought it might look ungrateful to be silent: he resolved he would say something, and taking the opportunity when Mrs. Finch was inquiring how things went on, he said, 'Madam, your room and Miss Jemima's are *still yours*; and, if you would give your poor servant the pleasure of seeing you there again, it would not be ungratefully received.' At the same time he paid £25, his quarterly settlement.

There was in Kemp's conduct something so beyond what Mrs. Finch had ever seen in any other character, that she was continually constrained to say within herself, 'This is a most extraordinary young man!'

The evening before they were to set out, Michael and Fanny went to tea at the Level-Bit; and the reader may be assured that Ellen Meredith neglected nothing that might show respect to Stephen's great relations, as she *already* considered them. She had even a glass of wine to offer, before they went out in the cold; it was a remnant of a bottle given her in sickness by the Lord and Lady. 'They want but one thing,' said Fanny, 'but *one* thing, my dear brother.' 'You must pray for them, Fanny.' 'I do,' said this affectionate girl. 'What a sweet creature

that Ellen is !' said she : ' I really think there is something good about her !' ' *Do you ?*' said Michael ; and he said it so quickly, that Fanny, with her natural acuteness, caught the secret, but said not a word. There was in Michael's character so much natural weight and dignity, that no member of his family ever attempted to penetrate *that* which he had not communicated.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MICHAEL KEMP'S ATTENTION TO THE CONDUCT OF HIS BROTHER JOE.—HE IS DESPATCHED WITH AN INVITATION FOR HIS FATHER AND MOTHER TO THE BROW.—THEIR ARRIVAL AND RESPECTABLE APPEARANCE.—COURSE ADOPTED BY MICHAEL IN FURNISHING HIS PARENTS WITH APPROPRIATE CLOTHING.—GRATITUDE OF CHILDREN TOWARDS THEIR PARENTS AN INDISPENSABLE DUTY.—SKETCH OF A CIRCLE ASSEMBLED IN THE HALL OF THE RECTORY AT AN EVENING LECTURE.—MARRIAGE OF STEPHEN AND FANNY.—THE BRIDAL FESTIVITIES.—A VISIT TO THE MILL.—ADDRESS FROM MR. LASCELLES ON THE OCCASION.—CONCLUSION.

THE intercourse was pretty closely kept up between the Mill and the Farm, and Michael was increasingly pleased with the prospect of Fanny's happiness. There was *one* subject which gave him yet more pleasure, she was evidently in earnest in religion; and though her natural vivacity still appeared, it was so tempered by her principles, that it might rather be said to credit her profession than to disgrace it.

Poor Joe, who had been with them nearly a year, went on very amiably. We have said but little of him; he was a sort of character of whom little can be said: very pleasing, when supported, but little natural energy; very apt to take the opinions of those by whom he was surrounded. But Joe was very happily situated: he might be

said to have two fathers and two mothers; for Michael and Fanny took on them so much the parental character, that he was as safe as at P——; so tenderly did they watch over him. But every thing that Michael observed in his character convinced him that the greatest care was needful to keep him from improper society: he was quite to be depended on; whatever Michael gave him to do, was done; but he had no ability to plan, and would have set down as helpless as a child if his daily employments had not been pointed out to him. Michael had some fears lest the daily visits of his master's bad cousin might be injurious to him. This unhappy man was fond of talking to any one who would listen; and Joe, whose mind had few resources within itself, found amusement in listening to the various jokes, and (what this poor mistaken man thought) clever tricks, which his low associations had led him to admire; and Michael very gravely told Joe, that if ever he found him in the society of this man, except when necessity required it, under his own roof, he should consider it *his duty* to return him to P——.

Joe was greatly affected by this declaration. If Michael was *not proud* of his elevation to the Brow, Joe *was*; and he looked upon himself not as a servant, but as a kind of partner in the farm: and as they walked together to church, he thought they were as good-looking a family as any in the parish; and as he stood up to sing, he always

fancied the Misses Jennings, in the opposite pew, were admiring him! Poor lad! these vanities seem harmless; and so, indeed, they were, to every one *but himself*; but they hindered his improvement in every way. Instead of listening to the sermon, he was thinking, 'Who knows but Miss Jennings may take a fancy to me?' and when Harry Jennings asked him home to tea on Sunday afternoon, the dreams of his light mind seemed confirmed.

Michael was penetrating: he had observed an increasing care of Joe's person; he had observed the vacancy of his mind during worship; he overheard the invitation to tea; and he thought it the first step to imprudence, not the less dangerous because it seemed innocent. He determined not to be asked, and yet not to permit him to go; so, suddenly, as he passed from the church-porch, he slipped his arm within his brother's, and said, 'My dear boy, I must excuse your attendance at the Sunday-school this afternoon:' and speaking to the master, said he should thank him to let some one take Joe's class; and then, walking on with him, with a firm important step, they had nearly crossed the churchyard, when Joe said, 'Brother, I must speak to Mr. Henry Jennings.' 'I'll wait for you,' said Michael; 'but do not stop, for I have something important for you.' This was addressed to Joe's weak side. 'Something important for me? What can it be?' He

stepped back, and said, 'I'm sorry, Mr. Jennings, as I can't come this afternoon, as something—' 'I hopes as nobody is ill,' said Mrs. Jennings; 'I hopes as nothing very bad is the matter, Mr. Joseph.' 'No, Madam,' said Joe; and he was highly delighted to hear this foolish old woman say, as he joined his brother, 'What a very handsome family them Kemps is!'

Michael heard this sensible speech. It was intended he *should* hear it; and it gave him an opportunity to speak to Joe on the folly of personal vanity, and beside on the sin of it. But he must make good his abrupt seizure of Joe's arm; and turning to Stephen, who was behind with Fanny, he said, 'My good bachelor, can you give us a dish of tea at the Mill? I want to have a little conversation; and we can walk together to the Rectory afterwards.'

Stephen assured them that he could; and the family party bent their way to the Mill.

Fanny had never before seen this neat residence: she was extremely pleased with it. Stephen had a great deal of his father's and mother's turn for neat improvement: his willows were carefully trained, not a dead branch nor withered end suffered to continue! his little fruit-trees were trained with the nicest care, and Michael was pleased to see how the provident youth was getting gradually ready. Joe was waiting and expecting every minute to hear his brother speak.

At length Michael said, 'Our dear father is longing to come to see us, and I have put him off till Fanny came : it strikes me, that if Joe could take his father's place, it would enable him to stay with us a little longer ; perhaps, my dear boy, you would be so kind as to set off to-morrow morning.' Joe was delighted with the prospect of a change : he should see every body at P——, whom he knew, in his new clothes ; and he did not know as he should speak to some of them : his father and mother had always warned him against low company, and so had his brother Michael. Poor Joe ! he shared this feeling in common with others. To be well dressed, to be raised in life, what is it, if there is no one to admire ? It is not common to meet a young mind superior to display. To know what people will say, to see how they will look, what mind of a common cast, and uninfluenced by religion, is proof against this ?

The morning came, and Joe set off. He bore a letter to his parents, which not only invited his father, but his mother and little Jane, who was now fourteen. It spoke well of Joe, yet hinted that they would do well to provide some one in their absence, to take care. All this they felt and knew, and ere they set out, left every thing under safe guidance ; and Mr. Walker, who perfectly knew Joe, and saw how necessary the praise of man was, to keep him upon a right balance, said, 'I am very glad, Joseph, to observe your steady

appearance : I hope you are treading in the steps of your good brother.' This was enough : Joe was never seen at the Lion. And the good neighbour who had taken up her residence at Kemp's, during their absence, was full of Joe's praises. He was at the nurseryman's all day, and in the evening dressed himself, and took a walk with his young brother and sister, to hear the neighbours say, 'What a genteel young man Joe was grown !' to hear another say, 'What a steady lad he is !' to observe a head turned round, as though they thought they recollected him, and yet did not know him. All this was a gratification to poor Joe, and bore him up safely, as a young swimmer is borne up by corks.

Every thing was getting in readiness for Stephen's wedding. Joe had never suspected this, and Michael saw no occasion for communication. Affairs were so far arranged, that Jemima and Ellen Meredith were engaged to come the next month.

Kemp and his wife arrived in a small tilted cart, a horse having been forwarded to them, suited to the purpose, by their provident son, Michael ; and when they arrived in sight of this nice dwelling, whose court was shaded by fine walnut trees, how did Elizabeth Kemp's heart beat with gratitude to God ! and how did her husband exclaim, 'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies ! and yet——'

The praise was broken short by the appearance of Fanny in her wildest hilarity : ‘Dearest father ! dearest mother ! hav’n’t you met Michael ?’ ‘No, child.’ ‘Why he set off at five this morning, to meet you !’ ‘We have not seen him, dame.’ ‘Perhaps,’ said Fanny, thoughtfully, ‘he might just be stepped into the town ; but he will be grieved to have missed you.’ ‘Ah, child ! he will soon be here.’ ‘I ’m sure,’ said Joseph, ‘what a nice place ’tis, Fanny !’

The appearance of Kemp and his wife was consistent with the son’s respectability. And here the reader may find it interesting to know how this good lad assorted these minor matters. He reflected, ‘I’m a poor judge of these things ;’ so he wrote a letter to Mr. Walker, enclosed a thirty-pound note, apologized much for the liberty he was taking, and entreated them to believe it was their goodness which encouraged this freedom. He begged they would provide with this money linen and upper garments befitting parents of a person in the station he now filled ; and not to suffer them to know any thing of it till every thing was made and ready to send home : ‘for, Sir,’ he added, ‘I *know* my father and mother *so well*, they would almost think it a sin to lay out such a sum upon themselves ; and I have long seen how they would deny themselves any thing to give to us children : and though I think dress of very little importance, yet I would wish my dear

parents not to see Michael Kemp better dressed than themselves.'

And here let me observe, that few children, in the lower ranks of life, consider the shifts and strivings of an honest parent to provide common necessities. How often have I seen a decent maid-servant and an industrious labourer begin life with hard-saved money, bring up a large rosy family, and as they grew strong and manly, and as the girls grew fair and tall, some article, well saved, was spared from the wardrobe of the father and the mother, and accepted with little reluctance by the children, till the weather-beaten form has stood, like a leafless tree upon the waste, nearly bare against the storm of winter! If any such children should read this history of Michael Kemp, I wish to remind them, that they owe their parents that care in age which they have received in youth; and to strip the arm that has sheltered them, and to assist in making bare the form that has bent over them, and borne all the ills of life contentedly, so they were well and happy; who

'Retire, content to quake, so they be warm'd.'

to be capable of *this*, is a proof of a heart hardened by selfishness. 'What should we do?' say they. '*Do?* do this: give one-fifth of your earnings to your parents; and do not fancy it is a gift—it is a debt you owe. If your parents are imprudent, give it in the necessities of life; but give it, or

rather *pay* it; for again I repeat it, it is a *debt* you *owe*.'

The hours flew in the family society of Kemp and his children, and delighted was Michael to introduce his father and mother to the evening lecture at the Rectory. I wish I could show the reader the serious party assembled in the hall, in which Kemp's father and mother, surrounded by their rising family, formed a principal group. I can realize in my mind the manly figure of old Kemp: his hands in each other, resting on the smooth round head of his oak stick; his hair beginning to take the tinge of silver, parted regularly in front of the head, waving on each side his fine clear forehead, imprinted with thought and care; and, above all, the touch of resignation on every feature, his intelligent attention, the varied expression of his brow and of his lip, as particular approbation followed the excellent lecture. His wife sat by: her drab cloak close-tied under her chin, and thrown back over each shoulder; her black bonnet, tied with white, shaded her mild countenance; her hands folded over each other on her clean muslin apron; looking with eager attention, to gain instruction from the superior, yet plain and pious exhortations of the Rector: Fanny and Stephen in their bloom; Michael in his; and the little square Jane, as Michael used to call her, whose uncommon steadiness and thought had early promised that

sort of character which questions the levity of those around them, and often puts folly to silence by the cool 'what for?' and 'of what use?' It was just the mind which some one has aptly called a *vice*; not one useful idea slipped from her. She had a very sublime idea of her brother Michael, and often wondered how Fanny could play with him. Mrs. Lascelles, whose quiet tenor of life, whose delicate form and health, disabled her from much out-door attention, was in the habit of close and keen investigation of those characters whom her husband's princely benevolence brought to the Rectory. Often would she say, putting her hand gently on his arm, 'But, my love:' as often would he reply, 'Well, Mentoria; now for a little cool prudence.' But there was nothing of this kind here: she was so delighted with the appearance of old Kemp and his wife, that she gave up her mind to unreserved admiration. 'I wish Sir Thomas Lawrence had been here, my dear, for I think he would have carried in his memory that fine figure of Kemp.' Mr. Lascelles, with that inimitable arch look which fine minds sometimes assume, put his hand upon her arm, 'But, my love—[she laughed] No, no; all is right; no need of caution there: praise is well bestowed. Why, Mentoria!—In this brief sketch I have introduced the reader to a character, who, like the hidden works of a fine watch, had a principal share in all the movements at the Rectory:

though little seen, little known, often thought proud, and always considered reserved.

Stephen, who rose every day in the good opinion of Fanny's parents, seeing the father alone under the shade of a fine walnut-tree, putting his spectacles quietly in his pocket, having closed the volume, ventured to say, 'Now you are here, and every thing is ready—' Kemp looked up at him with a calm smile, keeping a provoking silence; and poor Stephen colouring up, ears and all, determined to finish; and having summoned all the man within him, said, 'I should like, Sir, to marry next Monday.' 'Indeed!' said Kemp, still smiling; 'and who is the happy girl?' 'O Sir!' said Stephen; and laughing in his turn, ran in and told Michael he had settled it with his father, and that next Monday was the day fixed. 'Considering you knew nothing of my plans, Stephen, this is pretty well arranged; for I have just had a letter that Mr. and Mrs. Walker are coming to the Rectory, and as it has always been my wish that this kind benefactor should bless Fanny in her most important step in life, I have not one objection to make to the day you fix, except that it is market-day: but I can trust William.' 'It was the very reason I fixed that day,' said Stephen; 'I thought all the curious people in the village would be gone. I have one favour to request: that I might have my own Ellen Meredith with me. As to my father and mother, I have no

wish ; they could not leave home with comfort.' Michael made no objection. 'How will you let her know?' 'Why that is the favour I have to ask : I would go and fetch her ; for I could not let her travel alone.' 'Certainly not.'

Not to weary the reader's patience with tedious descriptions, Stephen reached the Valley, inquired for Mrs. Finch, and made his request respectfully. She replied, 'I believe, Stephen, you will have more company than you expect, for my daughter is under a promise to be at Fanny's wedding. If it is Fanny Kemp you are to marry, you are a happy young fellow, Stephen Meredith ; you will have such a wife as many farmers may envy.' 'I *think* myself *very* happy, Madam ;' and then, feeling a little proudly, 'Mr. Kemp says, Ma'am, there is no man on earth he would prefer to me.' This was not said without hesitation and colouring. Mrs. Finch had no design to wound honest Stephen ; and replied, 'You have always been a faithful servant and a dutiful son ; I have no doubt you will make a good husband. I am thinking,' said she, 'that I shall take a chaise on Saturday, and accompany my daughter and your sister.'

The reader must remember that Mrs. Finch's notions of propriety were correct ; and though she had not the slightest objection to her daughter's presence at the marriage, she saw great impropriety in her visiting, at the Brow farm, a young

unmarried man, so pleasing and interesting as Michael Kemp.

Stephen, who at this moment thought of nobody but himself, thought his old mistress was got humble. That she should take a chaise to come to his wedding was *indeed* a condescension; he could never have expected it. He now saw no occasion for his stay; and after a little converse with Ellen, and a five-pound note slipped into her hand, and a wish expressed that it should be laid out in a dress for the wedding-day, and a desire that she would consult Miss Jemima what to buy, he went away to the Level-Bit, to inform his father and mother of all the steps he had taken.

Ellen kissed and blessed her son. 'I do not ask you to be with us, mother; I know you could not; but my good master desired I would give you this;' and he slipped some money into her hand, which Michael had sent, begging that they would spend some portion of that day in prayer for him and for them. Ellen replied, 'No, my dear! I could not leave the house; I could not leave the children: and so, Stephen, my dear, there will be *no one* belonging to you at the wedding. Poor folks must not be proud, I know, Stephen.' 'O mother! I came on purpose to fetch Ellen; and if I had thought you wished to be there, I'm sure——' Ellen Meredith had dried the tear, and the flush of pride had subsided,

the moment she understood Ellen was to go, and was succeeded by a glow of delight when she heard she was to go in a chaise with her mistress and Miss Jemima.

The little height above us is the elevation to which we all look wistfully: and small and transient as was the honour of riding forty miles in a post-chaise, it filled the area of Ellen Meredith's mind for many days after. It *looked* well, it *sounded* well.

'Never title yet so mean could prove,  
But there was eke a mind that could that title love.'

Shenstone was right; and, with the change of 'no distinction' for 'never title,' it exactly applied to Ellen Meredith.

One embrace more, and Stephen mounted his horse: he rode to the park, to take his father and Willy by the hand. The father blessed him, and William felt no small pleasure when he heard his brother gardeners say, 'I wonder who that genteel young man is, talking to Meredith?' 'It is *my* brother,' said Willy, 'he is a kind of partner, like, with Mr. Kemp; and he is going to be married to Miss Fanny.' This was the first time Fanny had ever been called '*Miss*.' It served Willy's turn, as he thought; but, like other titles, it created more envy than love. Willy afterwards felt it, and he had recourse to one of his mother's wise sayings, 'Better to live by spite than pity.'

Oh ! for purer morals and more heavenly reflections at the Level-Bit ! But nothing is too hard for God.

Stephen's horse was put to his speed ; yet carefully rested, carefully fed and refreshed, it brought him safe back to the Brow, where every heart beat his welcome, and Fanny was not ashamed to say, 'I am glad to see you, Stephen ;' for she was under the approving smile of all around her, and wherefore should she deny one whom she had so much cause to regard the gratification of an honest welcome ?

'O tyrant Custom, how hast thou shackled man !'

I know not what it is in human concerns ; but when we arrive at the highest spot of life, that to which every hope hath pointed, every exertion tended, there seems fear in the midst of enjoyment : this is more peculiarly the case with thoughtful minds.

The sun rose with splendour on the fifteenth of June, but the group assembled to breakfast were neither gay nor talkative. The reverend father and the placid mother, as they took their seats side by side at family worship, often closed their eyes and lifted their hands in silent prayer ; and Ellen Meredith was surprised to see tears in the eyes of Mrs. Kemp, and wondered at the gravity around. Her mistress admired the discretion of the family, the beautiful cleanliness and

order of the dwelling, and was surprised and delighted to see how composedly every one of the party conducted themselves, on a day which frequently throws even equal minds into flutter and confusion.

At ten o'clock they set out—Mrs. Finch and her daughter ; Joseph Kemp gave Fanny his arm ; Michael took his mother ; Stephen and Ellen Meredith closed the quiet procession. When they reached the church it was not open ; but they rested contentedly a few minutes, looking at the tomb-stones, and Kemp said, ‘Michael, let us see where is your master’s grave.’ He had forgotten, for the moment, that Mrs. Finch was present. They walked together towards the spot, Mrs. Finch and Jemima following. They had never heard that Michael had put up the marble slab ; and when they drew near the place, and near the grateful memorial, Mrs. Finch was extremely agitated, took Michael’s arm, and said, ‘Honest, grateful young man ! God will bless you !’ Michael could only reply, ‘You are too good to me, Madam :’ and the appearance of Westrip with the keys of the church was a relief to all parties.

The old clerk was almost past his labour ; and Jem, partly from curiosity to see the wedding, partly from duty to his uncle, and from real love and respect to Michael and his family, accompanied his uncle. Every eye had greeted him with

kindness ; a complete change in his maxims had won every heart, so that no one regretted his presence. The congregation was soon enlarged by the appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Walker, Mr. Lascelles and his two little girls. Robinson, Mr. Lascelles' confidential servant ; Phœbe, the young ladies' maid ; Mr. Edmund Walker and Miss Sophia, strolled in soon after. The reverence and decency of the service, the right state of almost every mind present, gave a peculiar sensation to the whole ; and when Mr. Walker lifted up his reverend hands, closed his intelligent eye, and pronounced the blessing on the newly united, the 'Amen' was one from every heart ; and as Stephen took his bride from the sacred altar, there was no light step, no giddy mirth, but each walked quietly, silently, and reverently down the hallowed aisle.

When they had passed the church-gate, and were about to separate for home, Michael, with humility in his look, said, 'They had all one favour to request of Mr. Walker, that he would take his tea, and bless the bridal with his presence ; and perhaps——' 'Yes, Mr. Michael : I mean to come,' said Mrs. Walker ; 'and I was going to be affronted that you had not asked me.' 'And I, the parson of the parish.' 'Parson !' said Jane, in an audible whisper, and with a look of astonishment. 'Yes, little maid,' said Mr. Lascelles ; 'parson.' [Jane blushed.] Putting his hand on her shoulder,

he said, 'Ignorant people have made this word a term of reproach ; but parson means 'the person ;' and, by way of distinction, the first in the village : low people, and those who despise religion, hating the cause as curbing their vices, hating the restraint of true piety, &c., slight God in the person of his ambassador, and convert this title of honour into a term of reproach.'

Little Jane never forgot this explanation : and after taking a bit of their nice cake, the party from the Rectory withdrew. The young Walkers and the young Lascelles tripped cheerfully back, after they had left the porch, and laughing, said, 'Won't you have us, Mr. Michael ?' Michael bowed, and said, 'They made him too happy.' He took his mother aside : 'It would not become us, my dear mother, to introduce ourselves into the same room, except at family prayer. Before God we are equal : in the sight of man there is a wide distinction. The condescensions of our superiors do not justify familiarity. We must have a separate room for our afternoon company.'

The affair was settled, and Moss's parlour was destined for the visitors. It was an awkward business ; the poor mother thought so : but Michael had one principle so firm in his mind, that nothing moved it ; it was this : 'Keep your place.'

The interior of a wedding-day is often very wearisome ; the importance of the event that has taken place seems to unsettle every mind from

minor pursuits. There was a calmness about Jemima that was not to be shaken. She opened her work-basket, pulled out her old women's caps, and turning to the bride, said, 'Come, Mrs. Meredith, here's something for you to do.' They all sat down, and Stephen and Michael read to the party in turns, under the shade of a walnut-tree.

Old Kemp and his wife seemed lost in meditation on the goodness of that God who had led them all their life long; and Betty Smith, who was as busy as any housekeeper in the three kingdoms, yet found time to love, to admire, and to pray for the happy circle: 'To see them, sweet creatures, all sitting down to work for the poor, it delights my heart!' Mrs. Finch, too, could not help seeing, in the conduct of her dear Jemima, not only the fruit of her own care, but the effect of Jemima's better principles; her occasional observations, solid and just, on the book they were reading (it was *Bean's Advice to Young Married People*); Fanny and Ellen Meredith's arch looks at each other, when there was any good counsel for the women; Jane quietly seated, looking out the texts. In the midst of all this, who should enter the court-yard but James, loaded with a basket of beautiful fruit, and very fine flowers from the green-house. His young mistresses, the Misses Lascelles, had gathered the flowers, and they begged the bride to observe, that the one tied with a knot of white ribbon was for her. It was a choice

assemblage of every thing beautiful; and each one scampered to the neat bedrooms, putting them in water till the company arrived. Mrs. Finch busied herself with arranging the fruit, and James returned with his empty basket and the thanks of the family at the Brow.

Excuse me, gentle reader, if I do not tell you what they had for dinner; it is a meal to which I am not partial, and I turn gladly to the pleasant scene before me; for up the acclivity I see a charming party, under the shade of their parasols, coming to the Brow to tea.

As soon as Michael made known his arrangement, there was a universal murmur; and the youngest of the Lascelles said, 'Papa, did not you say we were to drink tea out of doors?' and the good Mr. Walker, with his benign smile, said, 'My friend, Michael Kemp, I am a great friend to good order, and look on it with as keen an eye as most people. You have carried this matter too far: we all come to see you. Now it strikes me that purpose is defeated if you are to sit in another room. No, no; my little friend, Maria, has made a very good proposal; and to the walnut tree we will go, with the leave of the good company:' and sure a happier assemblage of worth, of sense, of piety, and rural beauty, were never united, than those who now met under the shade of these walnut trees.

'Pray,' said Mr. Walker to his wife, 'do you

know who that young woman is who is speaking to Mrs. Finch? there is something very striking in her appearance. Mr. Kemp, a word with you: who is that?' 'It is Stephen's sister.' 'Is it!' said Mr. Walker, putting his finger on his lip, with a very arch look. Not a word more passed.

It is remarkable that persons in this station are apt, when they dress, to think they must step out of it, and fancy themselves arrived at the summit of earthly elegance when they have a veil or a plume of feathers. But every one here was in the dress which belonged to his situation. It was of finer materials; it was white for the occasion; it was very neatly made to fit the wearer; but it was in the customary form, and there was no need of any variation from the natural attitude. No care of flounces or furbelows; no fear of evening dews for the feathers, nor of brambles for the lace. If young persons could know what passes in the minds of their superiors when they are seen dressed beyond their station, it might cure vanity, but never excite it.

We must return to the house, where every thing was placed in order for the evening lecture; where James came, uninvited, and where William, who was returned from the market, was gratified with a sight of the bridal train.

Mr. Walker had chosen for his subject, what will naturally occur to every reader: 'The Presence of our Saviour at the Marriage of Cana.'

He observed that 'Religion was no check upon real happiness, but a curb on those pleasures which touched on vice and immorality. Here, under the smile of parents and advisers, under the eye of the mistress and the pastor, and, above all under the blessing of the Good Shepherd of souls, we rejoice reasonably, we rejoice purely. I do not anticipate moments of sorrow and distress; I do not talk now of the parting hour. God hath given us to enjoy as well as to suffer; and sufficient unto that day is its evil. Only keep close to God; listen to 'the still small voice;' vary not from his guidance on every occasion, and if ye should be called to suffer, my life for yours, there shall be a support in those sufferings which ye would not exchange for the world's brightest pleasures!'

He closed with prayer, short and expressive; and rising ere he gave the blessing, he spread his benevolent hands, as though he would have touched the head of every individual present, and pronounced the solemn words, 'The Lord be with you! the Lord bless you! and lift up the light of His life-giving countenance upon you, and give you peace!'

The shades of evening were closing in, and the scene was lit by a milder ray. The servants from the Rectory appeared, with cloaks and shawls, and the happy group separated. Jane and Ellen went home with Stephen and Fanny to the Mill, and

Mrs. Finch remarked what a day of unbroken pleasure they had passed. Jemima replied, 'I hope, my dear mother, I shall return satisfied to the Valley ; but I have lost a great deal in Fanny Meredith ; and if ever you do leave off business, I hope we shall come to ——.' Mrs. Finch quickly replied, 'I do not know what I shall do, my dear : I have friends in both places. I should be sorry to leave James, quite.'

Jemima felt she had been wrong ; and Michael, with that keen good sense and nice feeling of propriety which ever accompanied him, endeavoured to divert the pain which each appeared to feel. 'Madam,' said he, 'I trust you will always know that you have two houses. Nothing reconciles me to possessing this property like your presence and your smile. It clears my character from suspicion ; and, while you condescend to notice me and to visit here, I shall be respected. It will silence the tongue of slander, that the sister of my late master should continue her regard and protection.'

Mrs. Finch replied, 'I am something like Jemima, Mr. Kemp ; I shall be very sorry to go.' And here Joseph Kemp put in his word : 'We have been very happy with them, Ma'am ; they are good boys and girls ; and if the presence of God remain with them, they will still continue so. There is none keeps like Him ; there is none gives like Him. He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. He maketh men to be of one mind in a

house. Where His spirit is, there is peace.' The mother's eye was lifted up, and a silent ejaculation, and 'That is true! very true!' followed.

The next morning they began seriously to talk of going. The whole Mill party were there; and Fanny, with her arm round her father's neck, was entreating that they would spend one day at the Mill; 'and indeed I shall run to the Rectory, and beg Mr. Walker to come and sit under my willows; I don't see why Michael should have all the good things to himself.' Michael was standing by; had parted the hair upon her open forehead; had imprinted a brother's kiss; had breathed a brother's blessing: 'I am quite of Fanny's mind, Sir; we must all go to the Mill this afternoon, and sit under the shade of Stephen's willows, which kiss his mill-stream continually. There's the Meredith spirit in him. I do suppose there never was such a mill in the country; not a weed can live in his garden; and a spider would have a sorry life of it that sought a retreat in his mill. But pray where do you purpose to find boys to satisfy your clean spirit?' 'I really do not know; but clean they shall be if they live with me. I've been used to it at home; I've been used to it with my mistress; and I've been used to it with you; and I cannot live without it.' Mrs. Kemp took his hand: 'Very right, my son; only do not make an idol of it. Do not let a broken hedge or a dusty table come between you and your God. I warn you

because I know what it is. After a weary day, when I should have knelt me down and thanked God for his goodness, I was spending a part of my time putting my little room in order, and could not pray till every thing was straight. This is all very wrong, my dear ; seek *first* the kingdom of God.'

Perhaps the reader would like to walk, or rather trip to the Rectory with Fanny. She took Jane with her, for company ; and the little steady girl almost looked like her protector. 'What are you thinking about?' said Fanny. 'I cannot always tell,' said Jane ; 'but you *might* tell *me*.' —After a little hesitation : 'I was thinking I should like to keep Michael's house.' 'You!' said Fanny. 'Yes, indeed ! why not ? I am sure I could be of great use to Betty. You see, she is not young ; and I could see to Michael's linen. Some of his neck-handkerchiefs want hemming.' 'Now that is a reflection upon me,' said Fanny. 'Not at all ; but I only mean, I could be of use now you have left him.' If Jane had spoken unvarnished truth, she would have said, she liked her visit to the Brow so much, she did not care to go home.

By this time they reached the Rectory. The servants were pressing and curious to see the bride. She asked for Miss Sophia Walker. This young lady was greatly surprised to see her, and pleased with her simplicity. She made known

her wishes that they would all come that evening to drink tea at the Mill. The little Lascelles' were crossing the hall, and were delighted with the prospect of another pleasant afternoon, and ran in haste to their mother's dressing-room, to communicate who was in the parlour. Mrs. Lascelles begged she would walk up stairs, which Fanny immediately did: she met her with a soft look at the door; 'My dear Mrs. Meredith, I have not been unmindful of you, though my health confines me chiefly to morning air. You see here is a small parcel for you;' and she laid her hand on one sealed, and directed for '*Mrs. Meredith, Mill.*'

Fanny expressed her thanks, and told Mrs. Lascelles she hoped she would, some morning, if she *could* walk so far, do her the honour to come and see her. By this time Fanny reached the hall. The kind inhabitants and visitors at the Rectory were assembled there, and Jane stood replying in her steady way to every question of Mrs. Walker's. 'Oh, Fanny!' said her reverend friend, 'and so you set up for company to-day.' 'I hope you will come, Sir,' said the artless girl; 'Stephen and I shall be so delighted!' 'Everybody seems willing,' said Mr. Lascelles, 'from the Rector down to his little Maria.'

It was settled, and to the Mill they went. The ground sloped gradually down to the water's brink, and its bank was fringed with such flowers

as love moisture : and the modest furniture of his parlour, neat and strong ; his well-trained honeysuckle, and roses round the window ; his new Family Bible on the table in the little recess, by the side of the fire-place. As the party entered, Mr. Walker immediately spied the book, and glancing his eye upon it, and placing his hand, ‘I recollect some years since,’ said he, ‘seeing (I think it was in the Christian Guardian) a description of a lady who placed her Bible in full view in her parlour, and said, ‘lie there, thou best of books,’ &c. I would say to you, in the same spirit as the good lady spoke it, I trust, let this book be a check upon all that is light, and vain, and trifling, my dear young friends.’ ‘That,’ said Fanny, ‘was Mrs. Lascelles’ gift, Sir’ [turning to Mr. Walker].

*Mr. W.* She is like an unseen spring ; which fertilizes as it flows, and is only to be traced by its benefits. She has some nice plans in her head, now, Fanny, which you will doubtless hear of soon. I tell her, her dressing-room is the plotting-room ; there are strange conspiracies there against the reigning vices.—But we must begin upon the strawberries and cream, for I see there’s a fine set-out.

Now Michael and Stephen insisted upon being the footmen ; and greatly were the company amused, particularly the children, to see how quickly every thing refuse was floated down the

stream. Mr. Walker could not help being merry upon Stephen's happy situation ; a stream at his very door, not only fertilizing, but washing away every thing impure. 'Why, Stephen ! this is the very place for you.' 'Yes, Sir, indeed !' said Stephen with a very good grace : 'I hope there is no harm in cleanliness?' 'None at all ; only let us mind one thing : let us clean the inside as well as the outside of the cup and platter.'—Mr. Walker insisted that Mr. Lascelles should lead that evening ; and he chose, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' He said, 'he trusted that the first setting out of these young people was under the Lord's smile, under his favour, and his guidance ; and that their honest labours would be successful.' He referred them to Proverbs, 'every wise woman buildeth her house ;' and took occasion to observe, 'how much depended on the character of the wife ; what influence she had ; and that the wisest of men had decided, under the influence of the Spirit of God, that the wise woman builded her house : not that she might build, but that she did build ! she kept it together, she supported it, she ornamented it. In short, she builded her house ; she made her husband's home a shelter to him. How many weak and foolish women have I seen, who literally plucked it down with their hand ; whose folly and lightness send the husband a wanderer from his dwelling ! There are minor securities in married

life, as there are minor securities in building. A little mortar keeps out the wind; the aperture neglected, the storm makes its way, and the dwelling is injured: so, small kindnesses, small attentions to the ruffled temper, give unbroken security to the peace, and prevent the devastations of the storm. Soft answers turn away wrath: but I foresee she will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; but let him remember that a prudent wife is from the Lord, and let us all remember that it is the Lord that buildeth the house.'

It were vain to go on describing all he said; time would not admit of it: but Fanny's tears, and Stephen's emotion, and Michael's up-cast eye, and the father's and the mother's still and fixed attention, and the interested looks of every being there, showed how they felt the address. Thus the bridal was twice blessed; and the scene closed under the happiest auspices.

Perhaps the reader would have no objection to hear the reports and observations of the villagers, with which these two families stood connected. Mr. Greaves observed, that 'he was *right*, after all: that Madam Finch *was* gone to be married; and that he thought it would be more decent if she had suffered the young man to fetch her, and not to have run after him herself; and then he heard as it was not her, but Miss Jemima. That was a

little better, to be sure ; but still he thought the young man should have come after her.' And when he heard that there was no wedding at all, either for Mrs. Finch or Miss Jemima, but that they returned quietly to the Valley, he wandered up and down, 'in endless mazes lost.'

Miss Jennings thought it a very strange thing that Mr. Joseph was not at the wedding : she thought he was kept under too much ; that he was a young man now, well grown, and had no business to be kept under by his brother. These observations passed harmless, for every one was too busy and too happy to attend to them ; and till the moment of my quitting the society of these happy families, peace and love reigned undisturbed among them.

Reader ! the dearest friends must part. Methinks I could like to live among these good people myself ; but it must not be. I must go home ; and home is a delightful place, after all ! and my home has so many attractions, that I do not think I would exchange it—no ! not even for the Brow, the Valley, or the Mill !

THE END.





